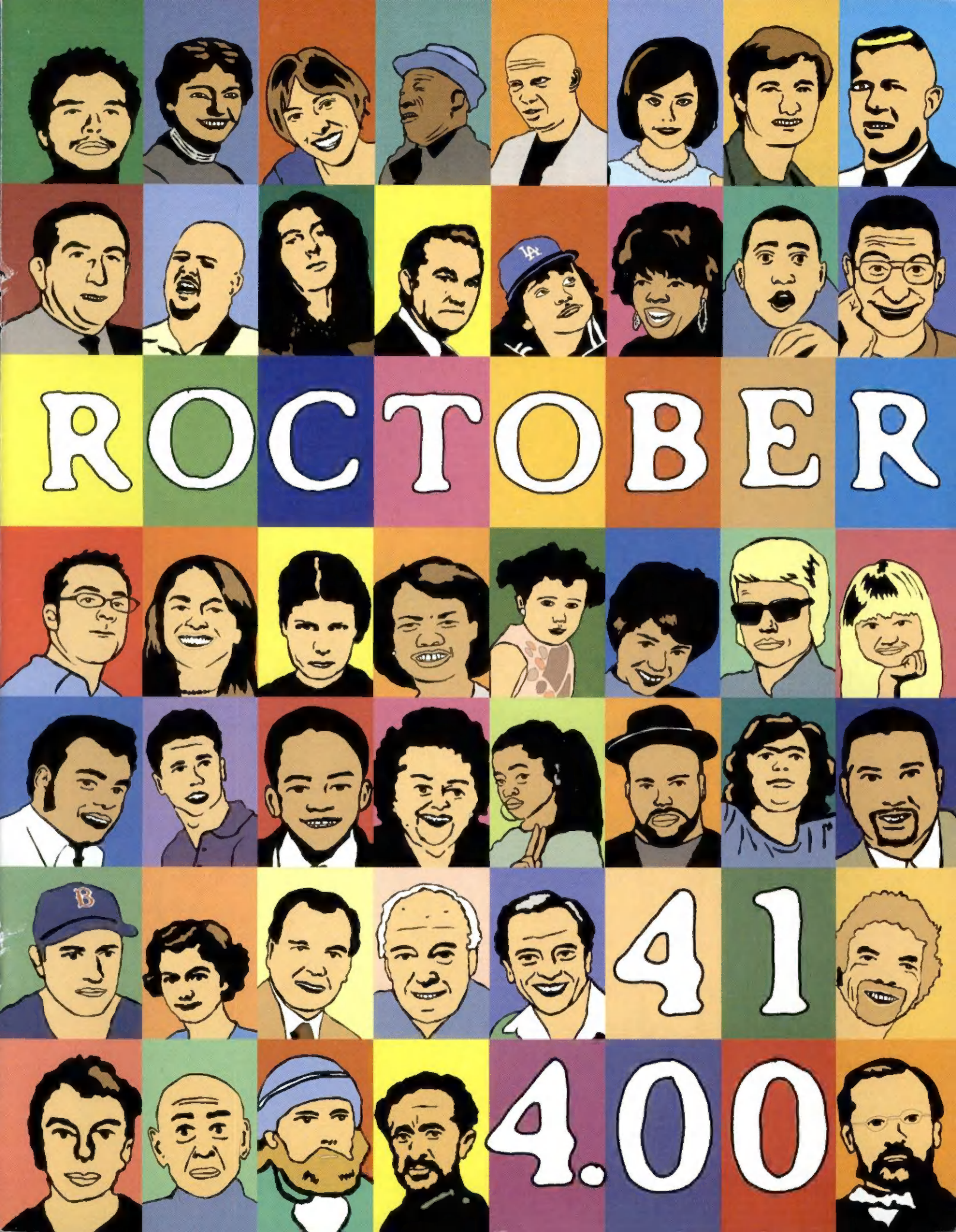
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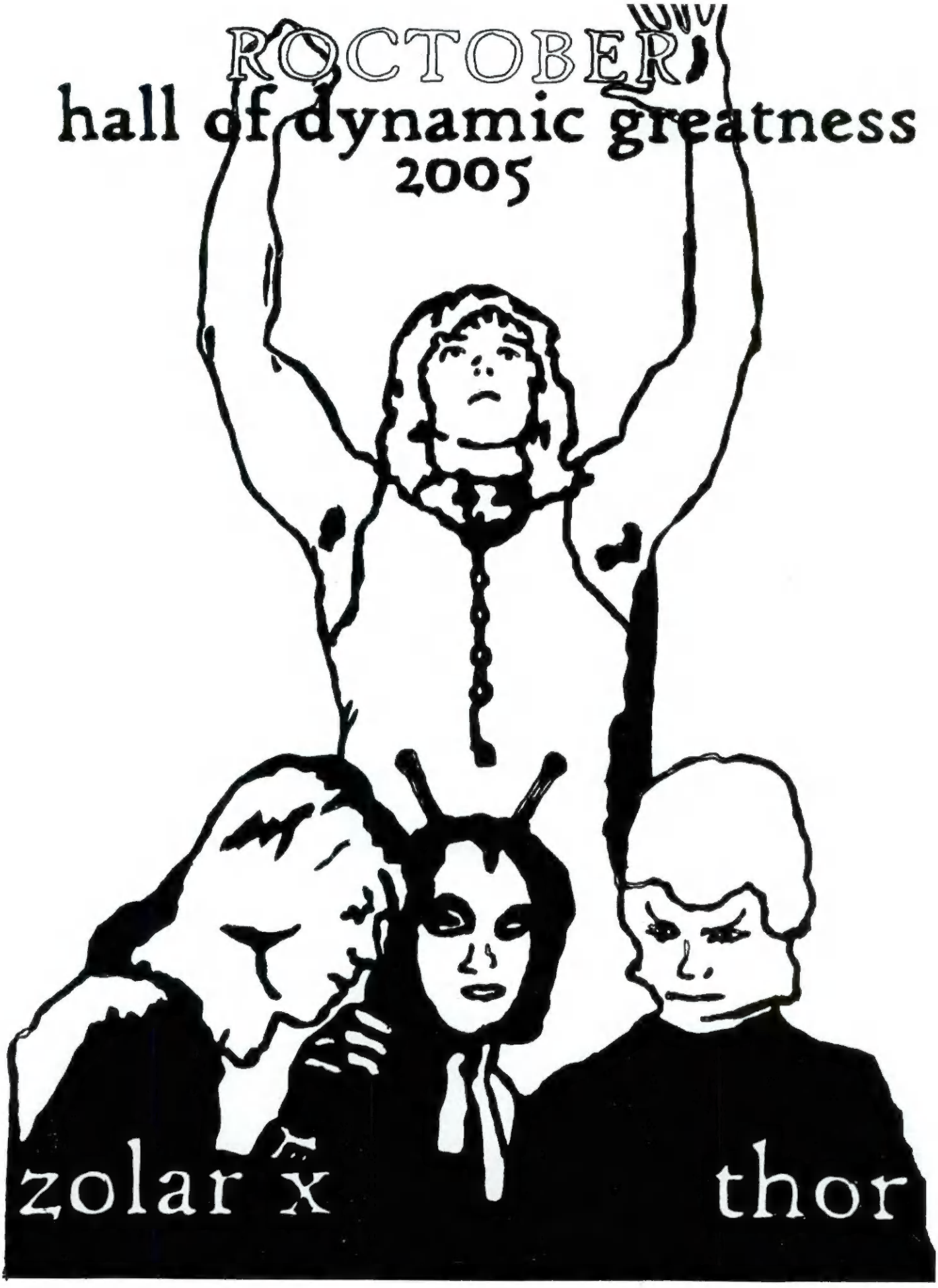
hall of dynamic greatness

2005



Letter from the Editor:

Alright! Another issue, and I am shocked to once again believe we have topped ourselves. This issue's lead feature on Zolar X is one of the most interesting pieces we've ever published. I realize that some of the revelations in the story may be problematic as they cast an unflattering light on an (estranged) member of a band that is having a revival of interest and a reunion, but I want to make it extremely clear that in my mind the greatness of Zolar X's classic work is uncompromisable Note that they, and the mighty Thor, are inducted into The Roctober Hall of Dynamic Greatness this issue. Go to www.roctober.com to see our past inductees. Also, we will be on a bit of a hiatus around here. I'm going to be on the road for the next few months, so our next issue won't be out until the sometime in early '06. This also impacts…

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Name 5

… bands with Japanese Monster Movie names.
1) Domestic Godzilla
2) Rodan
3) King Geedorah
4) Manda and The Marbles *
5) Destroy All Monsters
Special Mention (I guess)-Godzuky
* They may not have known that Manda is also the name of the giant sea serpent in *Atragon* and *Destroy All Monsters*

…Songs Scott Cornish Heard Performed TWICE at Ponderosa Stomp 2005
1. Roy Head "Treat Her Right"
2. Phil Phillips "Sea of Love"
3. Barrence Whitfield "Mama Get the Hammer (the Fly's on the Baby's Head)" ---he also did "Bloody Mary" twice, maybe three times, I'm not sure!
4. Dr. Spec's Optical Illusion "Tryin' to Mess My Mind"
5. Link Wray "Rumble"
(NOTE: We got to see Scott at the Stomp in New Orleans this Spring. That wonderful city is the beating heart of the music we love here at Roctober and we send all our love and wishes and hope and soul out to our great friends from that region who are now dealing with unthinkable chaos. As much as possible, we will do whatever we can to make sure this disaster does not become the cultural catastrophe it threatens to be. Let the Roctober family pledge to do whatever we can to support the amazing talents in that region as they try to reconstruct their livelihoods and art.)

Dear Roctober,

I just finished reading your article on the Dirty Wurds in Issue 39. Great work! I found this article quite by accident while searching around for information about the Dirty Wurds. Since you had my name and photo in the article, I simply couldn't resist contacting you. First thanks for a great trip through memory lane. I often wonder what happened to the band after I left it, and now I have a little more information. So thank you so much. I was the drummer for that band in 65 and part of 66. I was present at the infamous incident at Evanston Township High School (there's a bit more to that story by the way), and I was the guy that played drums on the 45 A/B sides of "Why". A couple of years ago, I discovered that the song has been played by a number of bands. I was also astounded to learn that the original was recorded on Pebbles. Speaking of "Why" I can even tell you about the huge mistake I made on that recording! Your article was an odd trip through memory lane because I never knew Alex Wald so by interviewing him I was able to recall many things that he mentioned to you. As I read the article so many things came to mind, girls I dated, places we played, and fond memories of the band members. I had a short romance with Justin's sister, Debi. I believe I dated Trish Follet before Justin did. She was quite a character! To see a picture of her was unbelievable! Again thank you Seeing the picture of the band in the newspaper from 1966 brought back a bunch of other memories. I have six pictures myself, and apparently, I have a real prize, one of the original 45's of "Why". In fact, I have put all of my pictures and the record into a nice professionally framed format. It's hanging in my studio right now. (I'll send you a picture of it, if you want). These are the early photos of the group. Most of the pictures are of the group playing at Bar mitzvahs in my dad's restaurant, The Tally Ho in Evanston (yep we started by playing for thirteen year olds!)

John, your articles left me quite disturbed. I always felt something was left incomplete in 1966. Although I left the band angry, it was a kid's anger (I left the band in a huff one day. I think we argued about single stroke drum rolls. They had no problem replacing me. I think it took about ten minutes to get a new drummer, and he was an improvement over me). I was never able to jerk my heart away from the band, the music, the teamwork, and I went on with my life. Not long after leaving the Dirty Wurds I went to college, got drafted, and never again touched the drums. Then about three years ago, I was up in Michigan trying to get a start up company launched when I found out that nearly everyone on my staff played some sort of instrument. So we rented a studio, got together, and made the most awful sounds you ever heard. I ended up injuring both elbows (like a tennis elbow) trying to play drums again. What happened was very odd, I got the itch again, bought a drum set, and have tried to play ever since. I have created a studio in my house just for drums, and I sit and play, sometimes for hours. I'm even considering putting together a blues band (Although The Wurds started with rock, Stones, and other covers like Them "Baby Please Don't Go, The Dirty Wurds leaned toward blues). For lack of a better word, I keep a "shrine" in my studio. I took the six or seven pictures I had and the old 45 record we cut and had them professionally framed. It is more than a reminder of some great times from 40 years ago, it seems also to serve as a warning: never leave things incomplete. Your article created a thought and opened the door to a tiny possibility: what would happen if the Wurds did get together? Why not contact Evanston Township High School and have the Wurds play at a reunion, or a retro dance? Why not contact WLS and see what they think about sponsoring a gig or two? They were involved in 1966. Then again why not just play for a while, draw a crowd and see what happens. Why not explore our own music, the music we never created? There must be some reason an old man like me started playing drums again this late in life. It cannot be just a simple hobby. There has to be purpose here.

And so, I couldn't resist. I contacted Justin Pomeroy, commented on the article, and offered him a suggestion. I remembered in John's article that Justin considered a band reunion. In the article he seemed a little hesitant about the idea but not against it. So when I contacted Justin and suggested he get the band together again, I was pleasantly surprised to see that he seemed excited about the idea. I told him on a moment's notice I would pack my drums into the truck and come to Chicago to make that happen. He sounded like he really wanted to do it. Then again, maybe he was just being a nice guy; he was always a nice guy. I haven't heard back since, but I plan to check in soon. I posed my note to him as opportunity knocking and suggested that before we die we should complete a few things left undone. I left him with these words, "knock, knock, knock". John and Jake, thanks for being there and writing about the old days. Who knows what you helped start, maybe nothing, maybe something, but I'll always appreciate you taking the time to walk me back to the most interesting times. Indeed, John, Long live the Dirty Wurds! Thanks.

- - Marc Bringman

Hey Roctober,

Roctober must be the only place in the world where one can read about KISS and Bert Williams. In fact, it may be the only place you can read about Bert Williams at all these days. And I REALLY can't believe you're doing a feature on Willie Restum! HERE WE GO! Restum was a fixture in the Combustible Edison tour van playlist. Puleo discovered him and tracked down most of his records. I can't wait to get the story on this guy!

Keep up the excellent work,

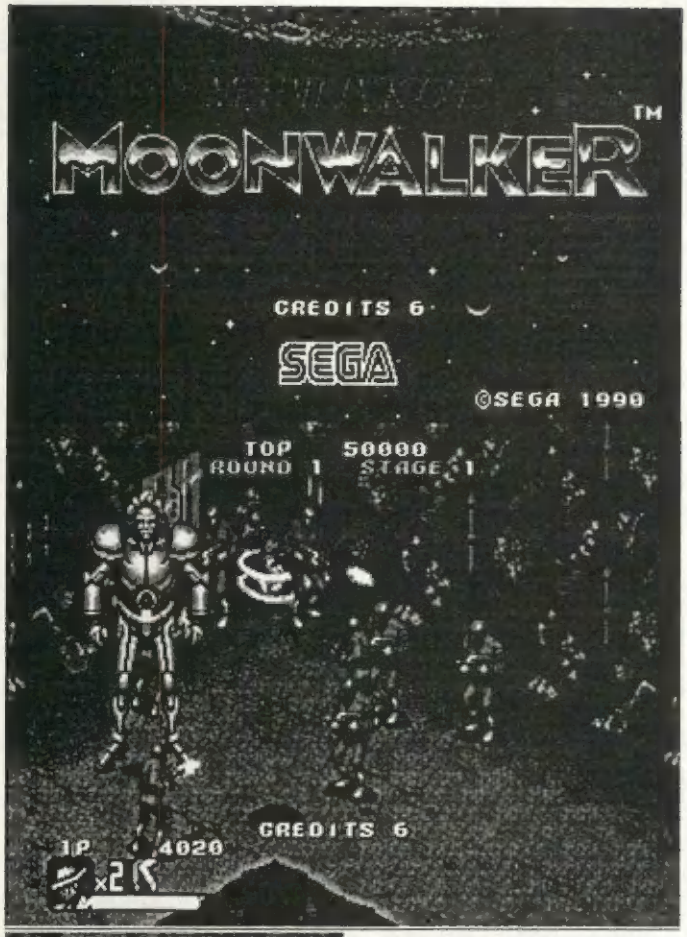
- The Millionaire

Dear Roctober,

Have you ever seen the *Michael Jackson's Moonwalker* video game? When I was a kid I used to go to this arcade all the time, they would get new games right when (or sometimes before) they came out. I don't remember the exact location of the arcade, it was in Chicago right on the border of Lincolnwood, it was called "Diversions."I remember when this game came out, it was this huge console with blaring speakers and joysticks for 3 people to play at once. Anyways, I just got a new computer and was downloading games to play on Mame (the arcade emulator) and downloaded *Michael Jackson's Moonwalker*. Holy shit is this game fucked up. The whole thing is Michael Jackson walking around rescuing little boys and girls who are tied up. They say "Thanks Michael!" when he rescues them. In addition to his regular "hit" move where he shoots some sort of electric current at people (or spins around and hits them), there is a special clear the screen move. If you hit it, a spotlight will come down on Michael, he will start dancing, and ALL THE ENEMIES ON THE SCREEN WILL START DANCING (every person, robot, etc.) before they all die. The hostage children also get their groove on. Whenever Michael gets hit by an enemy, he makes the totally fey "uh" or "oh" sound (the yelping he does in his songs). Occassionally he says "I'm bad" (I think when he clears a stage). The most disturbing part of the game is that occasionally a monkey (I guess Bubbles the chimp) appears on the screen. If Michael Jackson walks over bubbles he turns into a large Michael Jackson Robot that shoots missiles out of his armholes. It is extremely disturbing if you see it.

You should download this, it is totally easy to win and totally ridiculous to play.

- Bob Abrahamian, Chicago



Roctober remembers a Hall of Dynamic Famer
By Jake Austen

"But I was cool," Oscar Brown Jr. sings in one of his most famous songs. Though that self-effacing tune was a humorous ode to cowardice, the fact is that for nearly half a century of public life Oscar Brown Jr., who died on May 29th, was possibly *the* coolest cat in Chicago. Though his national profile never was as high as it deserved to be, his remarkable creativity, his unyielding radical politics, his powerful belief in the artistic potential of inner city youth, and his robust verve for life, made Brown one of the most important cultural figures on the south side.

Though he saw himself as a songwriter and playwright, his almost magical command of the English language enchanted enough people to pushed him into the spotlight. He recorded an armful of albums that ranged from easy jazz to hard funk, starting with his masterpiece, 1960s *Sin and Soul*. That album summed up exactly why he was given chances to shine, and exactly why he would never become a superstar. A song like "Dat Dere" was an adorable, jazzy version of "Kids Say the Darndest Things," completely universal and undeniably charming. Flip the album over and hear "Bid 'Em In," a profoundly disturbing song-poem that recreates a slave auctioneer's rap. And falling in the middle was his version of "Signifying Monkey," which to innocent ears was a funny song appropriate for the kddies, and to black audiences was instantly recognizable as a swinging version of one of the filthiest traditional street 'toasts." Though he had the skills for the mainstream, he didn't have the heart for it, and his forays into the recording studio, the stage, and into movies and TV (as a charismatic actor and host) always landed Brown back on the outside.

But the outside to Brown was the street, and on the streets of Chicago's south side he was everywhere. He performed countless benefits, was involved in numerous cultural programs, and his many mentees (including his beautiful and talented daughter Maggie) will continue to spread his magic. His importance as a brilliant artist was matched only by his presence as a bold thinker. And it was this role that gave me comfort at one of America's darkest moments.

Like every other American on September 11, 2001, I watched the footage of the planes hitting the towers dozens of times on television. But as the day turned to night I declared I would never look at that footage again, and turned the TV to a cable access channel, knowing that they would not have a live broadcast. When I got to channel 19 I saw Oscar Brown, Jr. being interviewed (the proletariat nature of public access appealed to Brown's sensibilities and he collaborated with access producers often). Here Brown, without a hint of doubt or regret, was boldly boasting about one of his projects that many would consider problematic. In the 1960s he worked with Jeff Fort and the Blackstone Rangers on a stage show called *Opportunity Please Knock*, turning gang members into musical performers. Though the history of that show is too complicated to summarize succinctly, it would not be unfair to say that the money that show raised ultimately helped Fort's illegal operations become more powerful. But Brown, ever the radical, was regret-free.

On that dark day most Americans were rattled and questioning their beliefs, wondering if the world had changed irreparably. Hearing Brown speaking, in his beautiful poetic cadence, remaining steadfast and bold in the face of decades of challenges was exactly what I needed. Just because history was in motion didn't mean people had to abandon their core values or beliefs. Like everyone that day I was jarred, confused, and overloaded. *But* (thanks to Mr. Brown's presence) *I was cool.*

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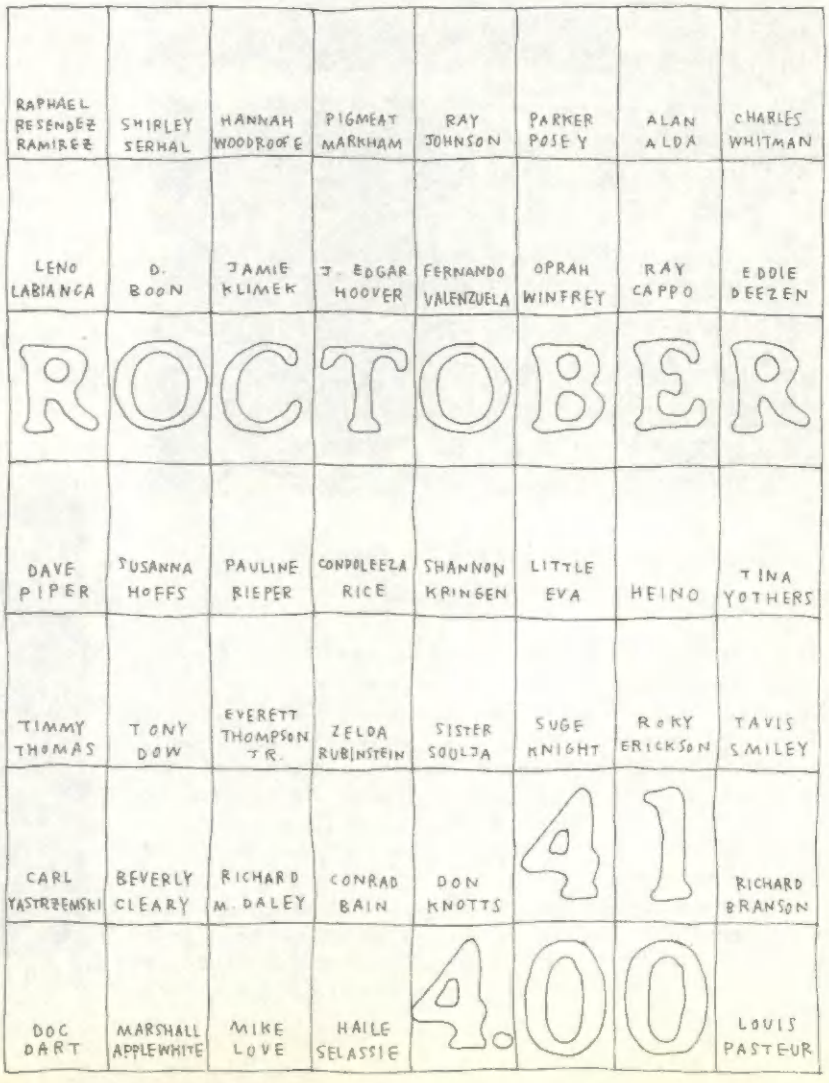

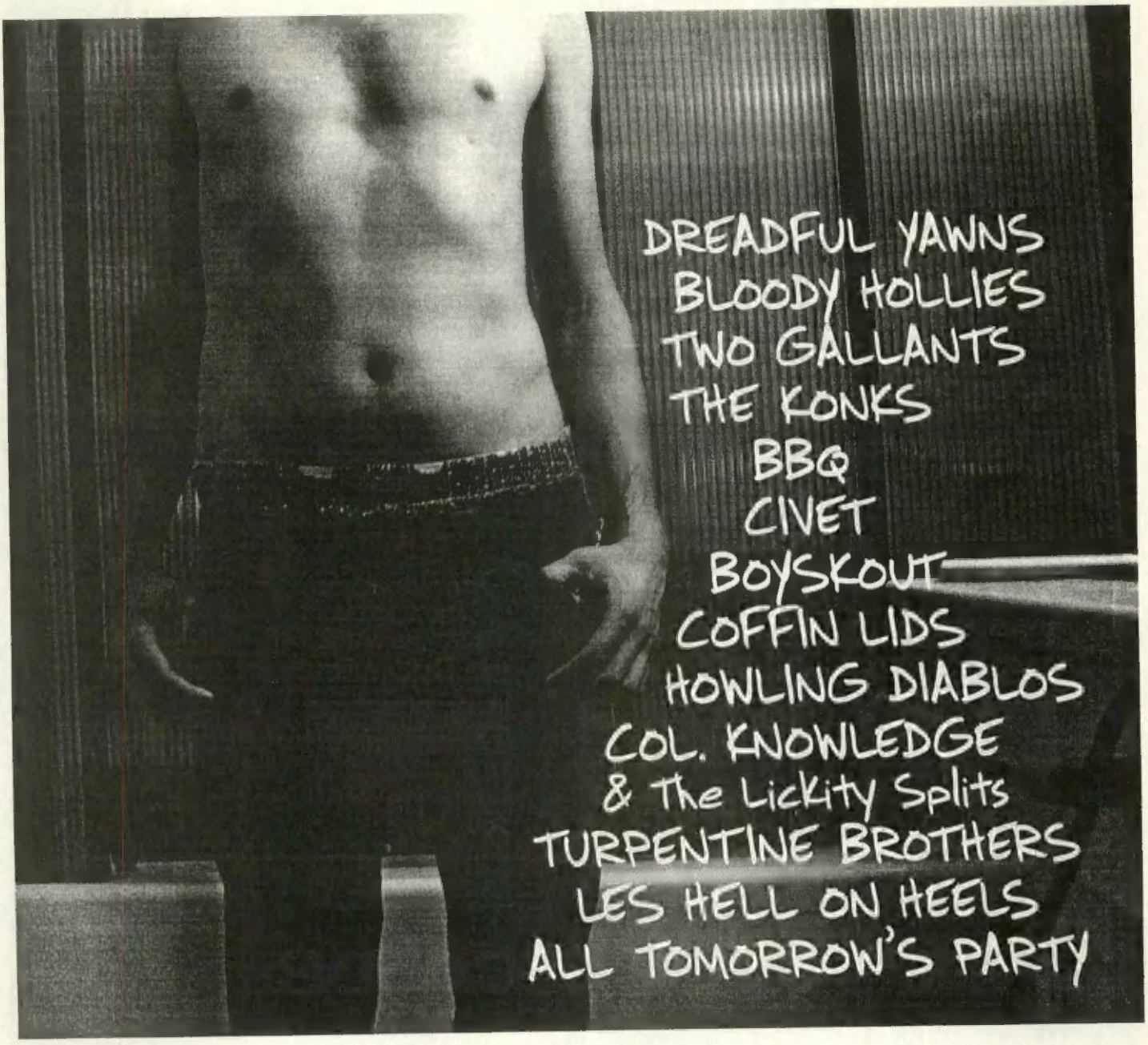

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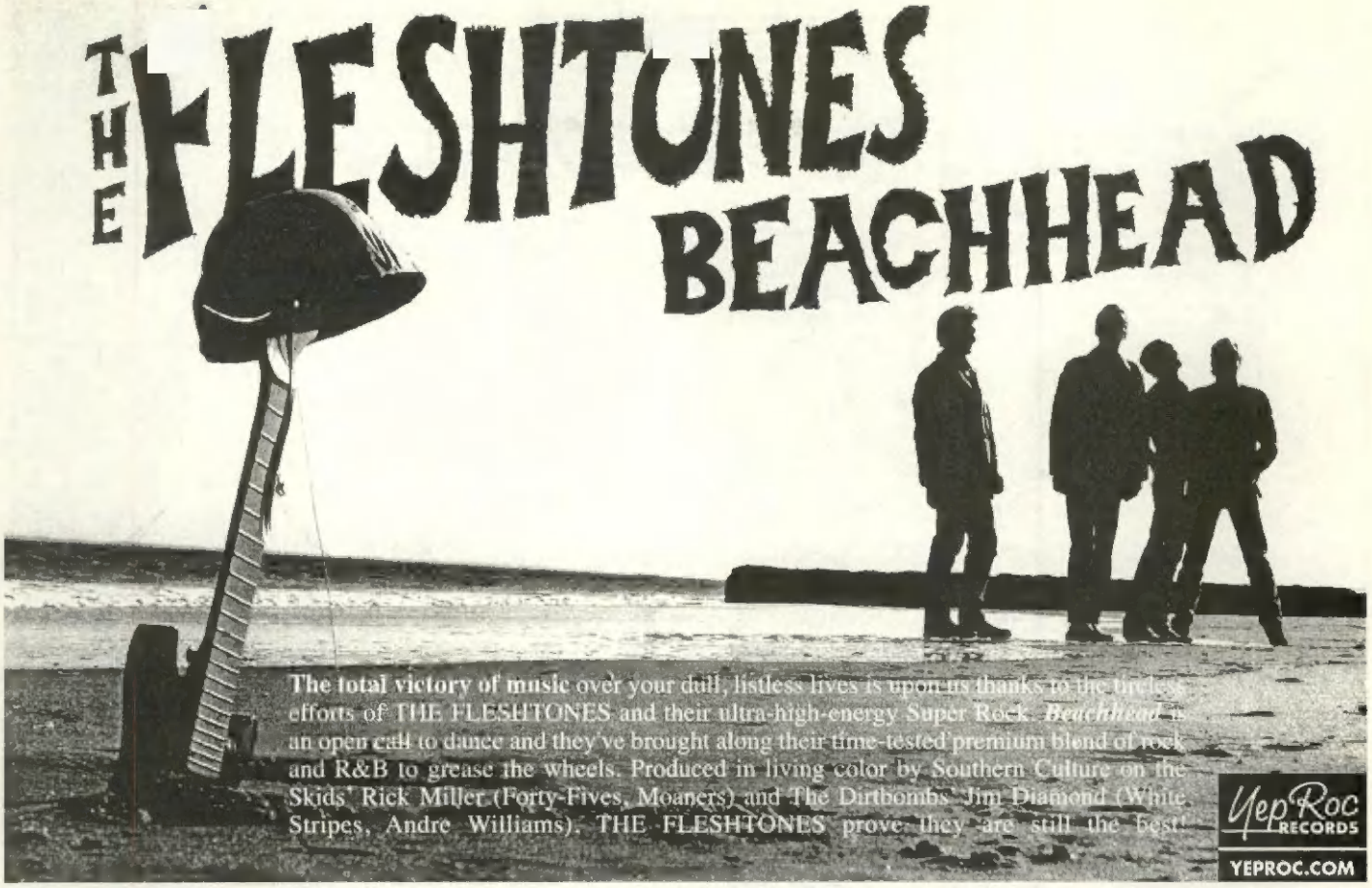

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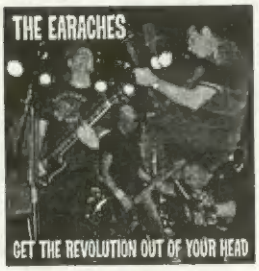

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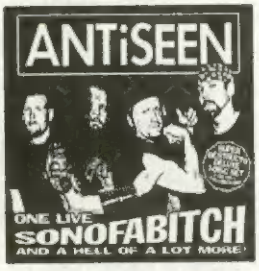

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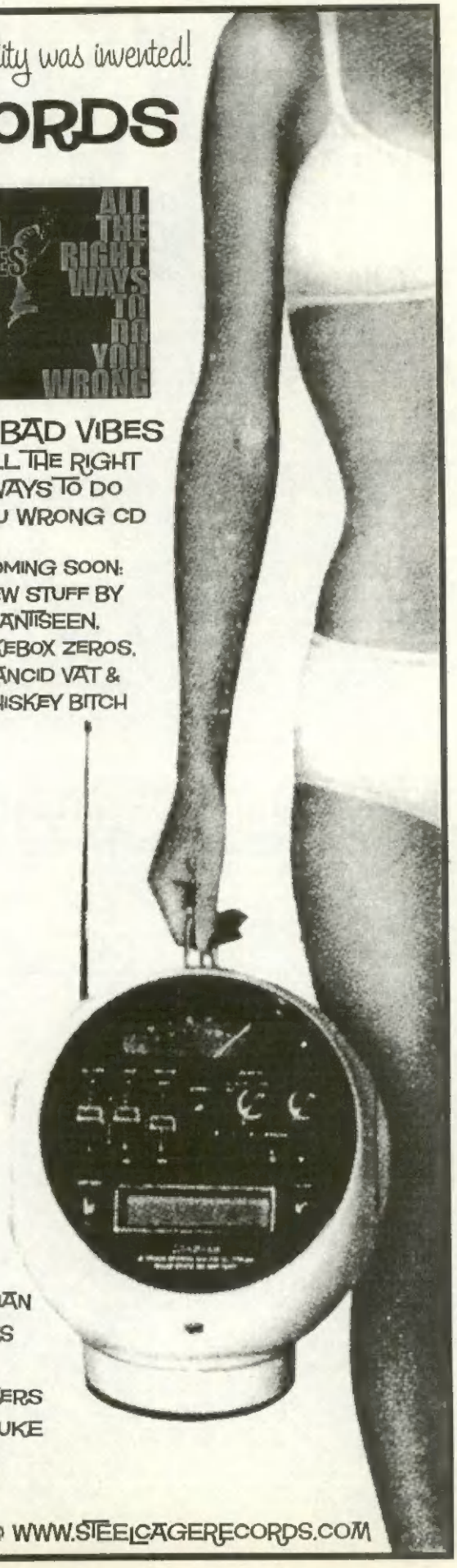

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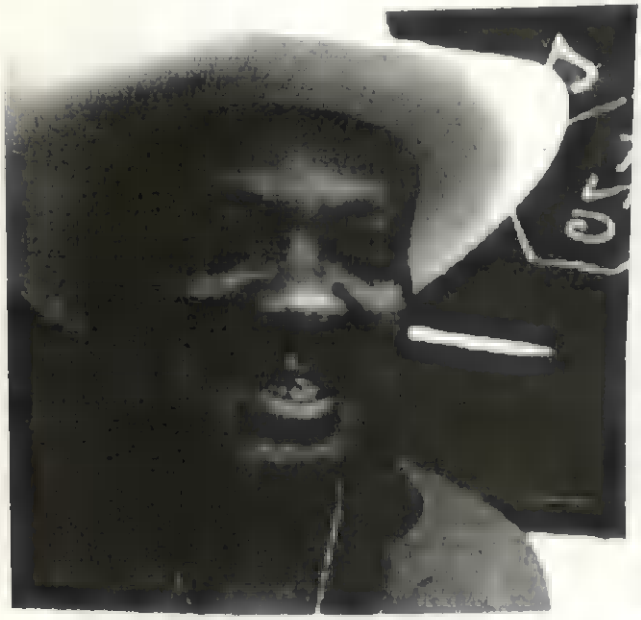
I'M ARCHIE BELL AND THE DRELLS

by James Porter



Archie Bell is not what you'd call a one-hit wonder. Songs like "I Can't Stop Dancing" (1968), "There's Gonna Be A Showdown" (1969), "My Balloon's Going Up" (1969) and "Dancing To Your Music" (1973) all rocked the airwaves and established Archie Bell & the Drells as a presence in soul music. But just like Alvin Cash had his "Twine Time," and Chubby Checker still makes hay off "The Twist," Archie Bell had that ONE song that he can't leave the stage without doing...to wit: "Hi, everybody, I'm Archie Bell & the Drells from Houston, TX...we not only sing, but we dance just as good ■■ we want...in Houston, we got a new dance, it's called the Tighten Up...first, Tighten Up on the drums..." Then an open drum break, followed by the bass and the drums gradually falling in, and then ■ horn section joining in as the song picks up steam. It was mighty generous of Mr. Bell to refer to his Drells on the record, since they're not even heard at all, save for ■ few handclaps and wolf whistles *[editor's note: maybe that's why he says he's Archie Bell **and** the Drells*]. The Drells were actually ■ singing group; the backing band was actually ■ local group called the TSU Toronados, whose 45's are valued highly by funk collectors today. We'd hear more of the Drells on future records (like "Tighten Up - Part 2"), but for now Archie had the spotlight. And to think, Bell was a soldier in the Vietnam War when "Tighten Up" was a hit in '68...and that it started as a flip side (to "Dog Eat Dog," an admittedly great song in its own right).

Bell, who continues today to do the Tighten Up in live performances across the country tells the story: "We sent the record to Atlantic Records. Just to show you what people know in this business, New York [home of Atlantic] is ■ dog-eat-dog city, and they thought that would be the hit record. We said that 'Tighten Up' should be the A-side, but when they got it, they ended up putting that on the B-side, which we thought was stupid. I was in the military by then. The way I got the idea to write it, we used the term 'tighten up' just like they use 'word up,' 'right on,' 'check you later, brother,' you know. That was during the Black Panthers period. I was rolling with this guy named Billy Butler - it was not the same Billy Butler that was Jerry Butler's brother. His real name was Huey Butler, but he didn't like the name Huey so he used 'Billy.' He came in, I had just gotten one of those 'dear John' letters from Uncle Sam; I wasn't in ■ very good mood. Things had just started to work for us a little bit, and here comes Uncle Sam. I was at home one day feeling down, he came in. The radio was playing, he was doing a little dance. I started laughing, it made me forget what my problems were. I said, 'what's that you're doing?' He said, 'I'm doing the Tighten Up.' So right then I started writing some words down." So the spoken intro wasn't spontaneous after all? Bell relates, "I wanted people to know that Archie Bell & the Drells were from Texas. I heard a DJ say about two weeks before that nothing good ever came from Texas, because of (former president John F.) Kennedy being assassinated here in Texas. I said that so people knew we were from Texas and that we were good at what we were doing."

They had been at it for some time. Prior to this, it started at Eaglesmith Jr. High School in Houston. "They had ■ talent show. (A whole bunch of us) sang in the glee club and the boys' chorus. We found out the school was having a talent show, so we got together, entered the talent show and won first place. We did that for about three years in a row before we got our first big offer to cut a record." The first single was recorded for the Ovide label, ■ highly-collectible Texas company owned by a DJ named Skipper Lee Frazier. "They used to have record hops and before we even got a record deal, we would get up

and pantomime while the record played. That's the way they did it back then." A few more singles followed on the East West label, before "Tighten Up" happened. And since Bell, thanks to the Army, wasn't free to tour constantly, there were several imitators around the country, including an all-white band from Nashville, TN. Bell says, "I ran into ■ guy who said, 'you can't be Archie Bell; he's 6'3 and wears a process!'" However, Bell occasionally got out on weekend leave, and he continued to rack up hits. He finally got out of the Army in April '69, but not before encountering famed Philadelphia producers Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff, who would go on to define "The Philly Sound" in the 70's, but at the time were still on the way up, with the Intruders and Jerry Butler.

"We were working in Broadside, New Jersey," says Bell, "and we did ■ show at a place called Loretta's Hi-Hat. After we did the first show, Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff came into the dressing room. I didn't know who they were; I called my manager, Skipper Lee, and Skipper Lee called Atlantic Records, and they were excited about Gamble and Huff wanting to produce us, so that's how 'I Can't Stop Dancing' came along. That song had two, three, four verses; 'Tighten Up' was just an ad-lib. That was really one of the first rap records." G&H were never known to do anything half-assed; rather than have ■ simple garage band backing them up, all of a sudden you heard vibes and string sections on Archie Bell records, giving them an element of sophistication that wasn't there previously. "Kenny was the guy with the pen, writing the words; Leon played the piano, sounding like ■ whole orchestra. Seeing how they laid down these tracks, that was like going to school for me. Had it not been for them, I wouldn't be the artist that I am today. Everybody learned from somebody." Atlantic also had Archie & the Drells record down in Muscle Shoals, AL, where they waxed "Get It From The Bottom," previously a minor hit for ■ Chicago group called the Steelers.

After Atlantic dropped them in 1972, he recorded for Glades in Hialeah, FL. Glades was a sub-label of TK, which gave us the Miami explosion of KC & the Sunshine Band, Latimore, George & Gwen McCrae, and Blowfly, among others. "When I got there, they were supposed to have all this material ready. I was down there with Steve Alaimo and KC, helping them write lyrics to songs. I told my manager, 'this is not going to work.' Plus I found that Henry Stone (TK owner) wasn't too straight on paying royalties - I didn't want to be there." His time with this label was relatively brief, and it's too bad there wasn't an album released since his singles during this time were classics of the highest order: "Dancing To Your Music," the psych-funk "Count The Ways," and the propulsive "Ain't Nothing For A Man In Love."

Since the Miami scene was apparently a shambles, Bell decided to look up some old friends who were doing well in Philadelphia. "I called Kenny Gamble back up; I was glad to go back." At this point, things were going gangbusters with their Philadelphia International label, riding high with the O'Jays, Harold Melvin & the Blue Notes, and others. However, even though the vibes were right, there was the feeling that the promotional muscle was going towards the better-known acts on the stable. "I (demoed) a lot of recordings that the O'Jays ended up doing. They would tell me, 'Archie, put your vocal on this,' and when I heard the song again on the radio, it was the O'Jays or somebody doing it. I really didn't like it because they were deceiving me, but show business is 85% handicap. You have to overcome 'em all. I was still getting what I wanted. After a while, there were too many people on the roster. The new people came in, and they put all the guys who started with them on the bottom of the list. I found out later they were just using me for a tax write-off." Explaining his departure, Bell says, "everything lasts but so long; nothing lasts forever."

From there, he recorded a solo album in the early 80's for the Beckett label. Since then, Bell has been prominent on the southern "beach music" circuit, which has resuscitated many an older R&B act's career (the Tams, the Chairmen of the Boarkd). In addition to performing extensively (including a stellar set at this year's Ponderosa Stomp, the acclaimed roots-music festival in New Orleans, LA), he has ■ couple of ambitious recording projects in the works. "I'm doing ■ blues CD, and I'm even doing a little country and western these days, being from Texas." Tommy Allsup, famed country producer and former member of Bob Wills' Texas Playboys, recently recruited Bell to sing vocals on a song called "Warm Red Wine." He's in distinguished company; other guests on this upcoming album include Glen Campbell, Tanya Tucker, Porter Wagoner, Roy Clark, and several others. If this takes off, we'll be waiting to hear ■ line-dance version of "Tighten Up."

And finally - what is a Drell? "A Drell is a gentleman and a well-rounded entertainer. It also means ■ singin' and dancin' motherfucker!"

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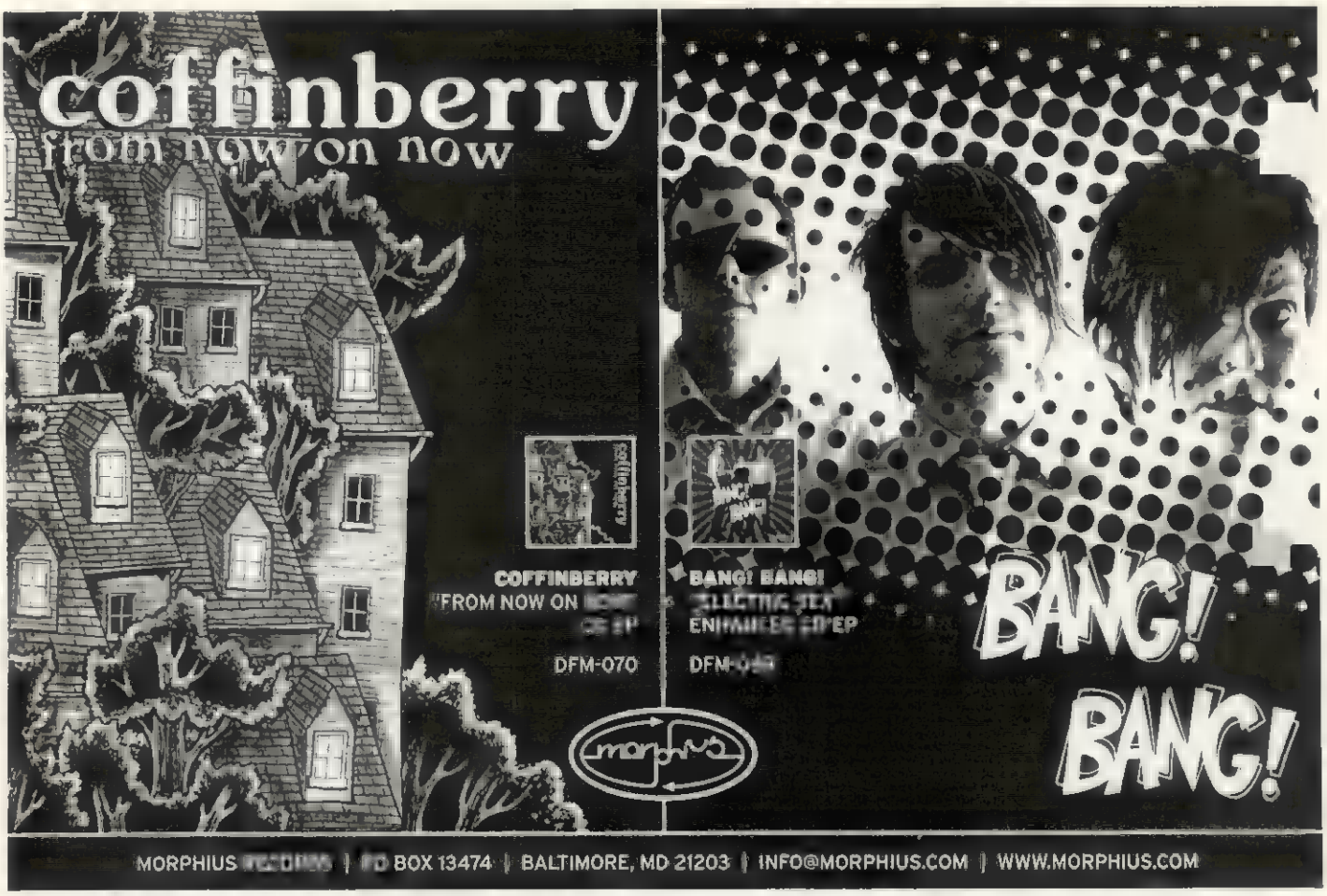

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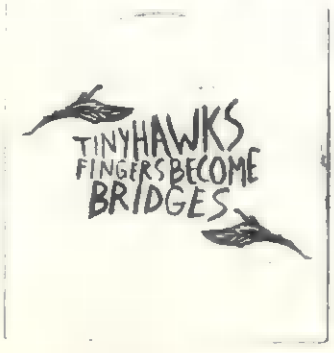

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ZORY ZENITH: ROCK TRAGEDY

by Zaanan Zelek

(earth name: Jonathan Poletti)

I suspect aliens *have* landed on Earth. Like Roswell and all that crap. I saw a show about it on TV. But what I can't understand, now matter how hard I try, is *Why? Why* this particular pile of dirt? Why *Earth?*

Take Superman, as one fictional (?) example. He's this amazing super-being from a very advanced race. You'd think he'd have the pick of all the planets out there, but in fact he winds up on our dump heap where everyone is always getting into trouble, and where the two most formidable native intelligences are both gunning for him. I refer of course to Lex Luthor, and to the true criminal mastermind of our lousy race: *Lois Lane*. At the end of the day, I bet Kal-El felt *pretty screwed over*.

Likewise for Zory Zenith. He came to Earth on a peaceful mission of hope & love, and look where he ended up!? In *prison*, with prostate cancer, depressed out of his mechanical mind. Even though his first CD was recently released and got great reviews, you can understand him feeling bad about being here.

Any alien would!!!

But I need to back up, as not everyone is familiar with this particular space saga. I myself heard about it a year (or so) ago, while I was researching the biography of another alien Glam singer (Jobriath) who played a concert at L.A.'s Troubadour club in August 1974. The opening band, I found out, was *Zolar X*. They were rather strange. They took the whole space alien, Ziggy Stardust, *Star Trek* thing to the next level, or maybe the next level after that. *They dressed like aliens all the time*. They were a rock band in L.A. and wore spacey costumes and antennae and stuff. They were incredibly weird, and had never been released on CD, which was odd.

I was fascinated! They'd self-released one LP in 1982. I hunted around trying to buy a copy. Lisa Fancher at Frontier Records laughed at me, saying it was "beyond rare" but that *she had a copy!* She said it was good, or actually, "REALLY good. Every time someone new hears their record, they go insane!"

I wanted to believe!!!

Later I found out there was talk of her releasing Zolar X's first CD reissue. But instead that honor went to Jello Biafra's Alternative Tentacles label, which is more of a punk/political/whatever type of label, but they liked Zolar X for some reason. So "Timeless" hit the shelves last October. At the very least you'd have to be rather *amused* at the idea of an incredibly bizarre rock band not getting signed for the 7+ years of its existence (1974 to 1981), as they disbanded, went their separate ways, until *20 years later* the tapes were released and music rags across the planet say it's great!

My own response was far more than amusement. I put my finger on the Play button, and suddenly got this *electric* shock -- not from the stereo, but from the sound! This bizarre alien voice was suddenly speaking in... *Alien*. I had no idea what he was saying. Then the band kicked in for song after song, the rest unfortunately in English, but all very weird and fun.

The CD was great, but it was *that* voice which really entranced me. It was androgynous and energetic, aggressive actually – a sound like you don't hear too often. In the CD liner notes you see him, the band's lead singer, Zory Zenith, looking like a boy Joan Crawford in blond alien drag. A rather amazing presence, highly alert and funny.

Suddenly, I had his address! In the course of Jobriath research I discovered that the former lead singer of Zolar X was living four hours away from me (by human car, that is; by spaceship it'd be much faster). *Zory was in an Oregon state prison!!!*

Instantly I sat down to write, pausing only as I wasn't sure how to address him. He had lots of names (in the Glam style), a virtual

whirlwind of personalities. His so-called "real" name was George William Myers.

I finally settled on, "Dear Zory."

He wrote back!!!

I prize this letter very highly. If I woke up and saw the house burning down around me, I'd run over and grab it. Glam is ■ depressing, this endless alien tragedy. Jobriath is dead, Bowie is a shadow of himself. But Zory is *here*, ■ lingering member of that race of strange, beautiful beings who touched down on this awful planet in the early 1970s. *And they did it to save us!* The mission of a Glam singer is always to save the planet from approaching apocalypse. I had so many questions for Zory. One of them was: Why bother? That I can see, humanity isn't worth saving. My only problem with the Apocalypse is that it's overdue.

"I just received your letter," Zory replies, in his all-caps lettering on lined notebook paper. "Delighted to hear from you! I'm thrilled you are enjoying the new Zolar X CD. Unfortunately I cannot share in your enthusiasm as ---"

He goes on for two pages about not having signed contracts or anything for the new CD. He asks me to contact the record label and relay his concerns.

"*Compliance is NOT OPTIONAL!*"

But then his mind spins around, shooting back into the early 70s like a time machine. His memories seem to glitter on the very page. "Those *magical* years after David Bowie first came to L.A. as Ziggy at the Santa Monica Civic in '72 were a dreamy hopeful time," he sighs. "A new dawn of Sci-Fi color after the explosive yet *pathetic* 60s." He goes on for five pages. Everything is so great. Zolar X's concert with Jobriath was their first major gig. "We knew our 'compositions' were excellent," he says, "but our live shows were still 'sticky' with the acoustic, crap p.a.'s, our *beautiful* yet highly impractical costumes and moving props."

Some people say that Glam ended with Bowie's live album in July '74. But for me, Glam ended weeks later, in L.A., at the Troubadour, when Jobriath was dying and Zolar X was born.

"I did ask Jo," Zory recalls, "Where do you think Glam is going?"

Jobriath replied, "Back into the woodwork where all true art goes, probably."

"He was *right*," Zory confirms. "Late 1975-76 that trash scumball Punk Rock stole our hair color, added leather instead of lurex, celebrated drugs and degeneracy, and *destroyed all of the 'sophisto' religious Sci-Fi that the earth so desperately needed!*"

The thing to know about Zory is that he despises punk. He utterly loathes it. Humanity *needed* Glam. In the early 70s, humanity was at its lowest point. The planet had been rocked by war after war. Wars between nations, between the sexes. Everyone was at war. The Vietnam War had just died down, so everyone was eagerly waiting for the next one to start. But *then*...Ziggy Stardust and ■ host of gleaming, glamorous aliens appeared on earth, prophesying the imminent end of the world, and preaching the one possible cure.

Zory capitalizes, underlines, and highlights it:

"*SPACE AGE LUV!!*"

Then punk came and spoiled everything. That, and KISS -- a band that Zory hates, if possible, even more than Punk. Zolar X hung out with KISS in 1974, and did not come away unscathed. "Ace took his tufted silver lamé accessories from *us*," Zory fumes. KISS was a direct affront to his greatest ideal -- the beautiful space alien *vilified* and *demonized*.

"Kids in Satan's Service," he huffs.

After Glam, it's like humans *wanted* to be humans again. The lower they could go, the better. So Zolar X was cast into the dustbin of Pop, until found by... Jello Biafra?

"It's a sick irony to me," Zory fumes, "that a former *punk* would release our songs."

He ends the letter with news. He has cancer but it's in remission. He's writing his memoirs. He's become a serious Christian, sings in prison chapel and gives sermons. He mentions the cause of his imprisonment ("my best friend, a drunken brawl, he got nothing, I got 10"). He signs the letter "The Capt." because he's *Captain Zory Zenith!!!*

★★★★★★★

I have my orders! I send Zory's address to Alternative Tentacles, who thank me as they didn't have it. Suddenly I'm in touch with Ygarr Ygarrist, the Zolar X lead guitarist! He seems a lot more normal than Zory. Maybe it works for him, I don't know. Anyway, I find more vintage photos of Zory. His look was so fascinating. Not male, not female, but not faggy. A difficult balance. It's like he was... *on a mission?*

I admire that a lot.

There's high praises for the CD in mags from *Classic Rock* to *Uncut* to *Mojo*. It's showing up on year-end "best of" lists, and Steve Jones (former Sex Pistol) plays it on his L.A. radio show. Only *one* review I find isn't that positive, and notably, it's by a woman. I clip them and send them off.

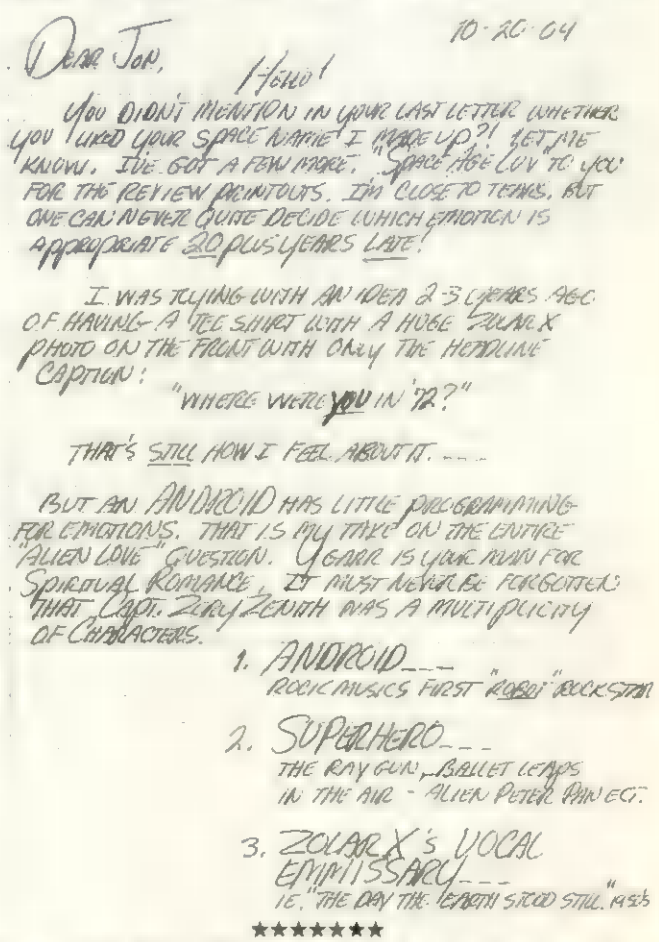
"I'm close to tears," Zory replies. "But one can never quite decide which emotion is appropriate 20 plus years late!"

The question of 'emotion' is tricky for him. He can't decide which one to have, *since he doesn't have emotions*. I learn in this letter that Zory Zenith is not exactly biological. He is -- a phrase he uses a lot -- "the Zorian Zormar Mediator Model 11000."

He is an ANDROID.

"And," he concludes, "an android has little programming for emotions."

He lists all the things that he is, in order. "1. *Android*. Rock music's first 'robot' rockstar. 2. *Superhero*. The raygun, ballet leaps in the air, alien Peter Pan, etc. 3. Zolar X's *Vocal Emissary*."



★★★★★★★

I'd asked Zory for a brief history of Zolar X, especially on points where the CD liner notes were a bit sketchy. If they were aliens from outer space, for instance, what planet were they from, and why did they ever come *here*? I felt sure Zory would know, and he did.

"Ygarr, Zany, Rojan, Eon, Ufoian, Romni, etc. were the alien biological beings from *Plutonia*," he replies. Their mission was "*to*

warn Earth of its future cataclysmic doom." And also to announce "the soon universal return of the Son of God, Jesus Christ."

"Zolar X was not ■ glam rock band!" he exclaims.

He highlights the letters in green magic marker, to drive the point home. "It was an alien peace emissary unit who developed a communications for human youth called 'Rocket Roll'. The purpose being 'Space Age Luv'. Zolar X was 'sent' to bring healing and hope to a burned out cinder of a city. LOS ANGELES!"

He sighs. The subject is so complex.

"It will take the book I'm writing to sort truth from fiction," he says. He'd entered prison, in fact, intending to begin his memoirs immediately. Titled *The Greatest Show Never Played*, it was envisioned as ■ down & dirty tell-all, ■ sequel to Marc Spitz & Brendan Mullen's book *We've Got the Neutron Bomb*, a history of punk rock in L.A. that, weirdly, opens with Zolar X. But Zory soon realized this idea was "Satan's design." He shifted to ■ more redeeming tone. Now it's called *Chained to the World: An Underground Rock Star's Crawl From Bondage*.

A really good title, I think.

He's co-writing with a pastor friend but they haven't gotten much done. "I'm too depressed," Zory says. "I need vitamins. I stay in bed a lot."

The answer hits me like a comet.

I can do a *profile* on him! Maybe a website. Get the ball rolling. This is ■ major *alien crash landing* on the level of Roswell itself! Zory's referred to a lot of unpublished photos and music. Someone needs to go through the wreckage, maybe with a toothbrush.

Zory agrees.

Or in his words, "REALLY? *REALLY?*"

He's excited. The story of his life, what he calls "my tragedy," is his last gift to the planet. "We will *milk* the publicity the Devil is giving me back for the glory of Christ!" he exclaims. "Amen!"

He gives me my own alien Zolarian name, *Zaanan Zelek*, and we get to work!!!

★★★★★★★

Zory was born (on earth) on May 18, 1952. His father was ■ coal miner. "I was a hillbilly kid," he says, which is somehow amazing to me. He was an only child, which he credits ■ inspiring his amazing imagination.

When he was little his family moved to Kentucky, a time marked in his memory by three events. First, his parents started to drink. Second, he started going to church and singing in the choir ("a soprano," he always notes). Third, he went to the movies with a babysitter he had ■ crush on. She ditched him for her boyfriend, and he was left with the movie, *Girls! Girls! Girls!* . . . and its star, who would become the great inspiration of his life, the reigning alien of all pop culture:

ELVIS.

Zory's dad was laid off again and the family moved to L.A. "It was a run for my life every day to keep from being beaten up and robbed," he says. His dad became ■ security guard and both his parents became, not just drunks, but angry drunks. "The violence was over the top," he recalls. "Knives, skillets, you name it. Dad would take ■ lot of verbal abuse from Mom. She was obnoxious! Knowing full well that eventually he'd get up from his easy chair and wreak destruction!"

By 1965 they'd moved to a nicer neighborhood but Zory's childhood was at that point totally screwed over. He was ■ "lousy student" who got by on comedy, dancing, mime, and *music*. He got a drum set and piddled around in a few bands, and with his girlfriend ("my first true love and sex queen") saw all the major bands that blew through town, from the Who to an earthshaking concert by the Beatles, where the screams of girls were like "roaring jets."

By 11th grade Zory's attendance at school was more ■ series of cameo appearances. They told him he was being kicked back down to 10th. Zory told them where to go, and left. (He's working on his GED now.) His future was apparent to him. He was ■ rock star.

Zory's ordinary human name is actually "Billy," since his father was also named George. At age 18, Billy pulled his first major self-promotional stunt. Following the "Paul is Dead" hoax that made everyone think Paul McCartney was dead, he "conned" his dad into letting him change his last name to McCartney. He then printed up flyers with the question "*Who is Billy McCartney?*" and posted them up & down Sunset Boulevard. He tells the story with relish. Without even having to lie, he says, he was accepted as Paul's cousin, and rubbed shoulders with famous folk in the L.A. club scene.

But he wanted to be ■■ artist, not a con artist. He needed a band, and in 1971, he got one. Having kept up his drumming, he was accepted into Shady Lady, a proto-Glam band whose members did lipstick, platform boots and satin pants way before all the other guys.

"Women loved us, guys hated us," Billy gloats. "The press called us ■ 'shitty litter' of young punks!" Musically they were akin to the Rolling Stones, and visually anticipated the New York Dolls. They recorded an LP, but their label dropped them before it was released, and ■ band member stole all their equipment to support his drug habit. Shady Lady was over.

Billy wasn't the least bit phased. He'd seen the future: Ziggy Stardust at the Santa Monica Civic.

"I was stunned for days!" he exclaims. "That hair! Those wedgie boots and space suit! The 'Martian Elvis!' I was in love. I saw him up close again in 1973 at the Hollywood Palladium. To me, the Sci-Fi god was collecting his chosen few. I took the flight!"

Launching into orbit, he dyed his hair red and began dreaming of a 4-piece band of blond aliens with pointed bangs, to be called *Zory Glory and the Seattle Satellites*. (He liked Seattle, for the Space Needle.) He began writing space songs, and with his new girlfriend Kitty Wayne (aka 'Veonity' or 'Ve') he began making and wearing, outrageous space-age costumes. (Ve later became ■ major Hollywood makeup artist, winning an Oscar for *Mrs. Doubtfire*. Does the male makeover go back to Zory??)

"I *became* Zory," he says. He drew comic book pictures of himself ■■ ■ superhero and again plastered them across Sunset Blvd. Then one night in 1973 he went to Rodney Binginheimer's English Disco, the famous Glam club, and saw two guys with silver-blond hair and pointed bangs, *looking like they'd stepped out of his sketches!*

"It was eerie!" he exclaims.

"What kind of music do you play?" Ygarr asked him.

"Rock 'n' roll," answered Zory.

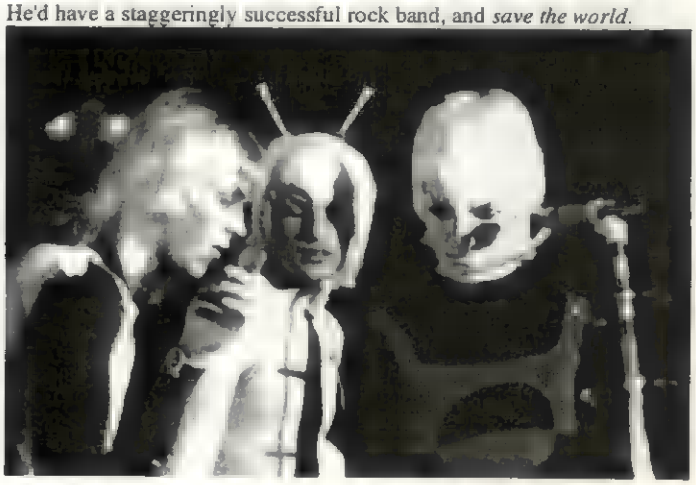
Hmmf! "We play *Space Symphony*," Ygarr shot back.

That's how Zolar X was formed.

They wanted him to play drums.

"I told them, *nope*," Zory says. "Zory is ■ singer and an android! I'm looking to *front* ■ band, not sit behind one."

Together in Laurel Canyon, the proto-aliens listened to a heady brew of tunes, from Bowie to Beethoven, colliding in the cauldron of Pop. They honed two songs, "Space Age Love" and "Parallel Galaxies." Zory knew his singing voice needed work. ("Lots of work!") But his mission was before him, for the first time in his life. He'd have a staggeringly successful rock band, and *save the world*.



★★★★★★★

Zory and I write a lot, not just about the past, but about, appropriately,

the *future*. In the wake of the CD release, Ygarr is working to re-form Zolar X and play some gigs. The problem of the missing frontman (ie. himself) weighs heavily on Zory's mind. He suddenly comes up with the answer. There will be a *new* lead singer, a *GIRL ANDROID*. Her name is Zana Zormarr, model #10036. (Note: she's more advanced.) Zory sends me a picture of ■ space age babe in a skin-tight silver suit he's found in a magazine. With ■ magic marker he's colored in a new blonde hair-do for her, and two antennae.

His mind otherwise rockets around, sometimes manic, sometimes depressed, sometimes in the same sentence. "The doctors think I'm bipolar," he reports. "I told them that in my mom and dad's day it was called GENIUS!"

The doctors, he says, "just looked at me."

He was on medication but is off it, alluding vaguely to side-effects. He struggles for clarity. "I'm in a transitional state mentally," he says.

Zory can always be divided into several parts. One of them longs to be part of Zolar X, another longs to be free of it. Upon his arrest in 2002, after ■ lifetime spent flirting with faith, he became ■ Christian. In his letters he frequently rises up to sermonize against the entire entertainment establishment. This is "Bible Bill," or "the evangelist Billy Myers.

"God has his own realm," he says. "He doesn't want or need to Devil's art, music, prose, or clothes."

With a clean sweep Bible Bill dismisses all the prior characters in Zory's mental theater. "Billy McCartney is *irrelevant*. Zory Glory is *irrelevant*. Billy Bo Day is *irrelevant*."

But strangely enough, Zory Zenith -- *Captain* Zory Zenith, of Zolar X -- remains *highly* relevant.

"Well bless our hearts," he says, "what are model 11000 androids FOR right?!! (the 'black box' keepers). I managed, co-produced, designed, sang, danced, promoted & composed that band into its very EXISTENCE. I've seen the captain's seat often. That's why around 1975, I added the designation of 'CAPT.' upon myself!!!"

Typical Zory talk. The hillbilly preacher and the alien wrestle in the prison cell of his thoughts. This is not an "identity crisis" per se. *For the Glam singer, identity itself is a crisis*.

He is also, I should add, increasingly obsessed with getting out of jail. He now says he was railroaded into his 10 year sentence. A witness lied, the D.A. had no interest in the truth, and his public defender lawyer was a wuss. The altercation for which he was convicted Zory now describes as "mutual combat" or "self-defense." He's intent on raising money for a Federal appeal based, he says, ■■ ■ recent Supreme Court case governing sentencing in jury trials, except he didn't have a jury trial.

I don't know quite know what to say.

He's whipped up a mini-history of his life for me, and suggests other contacts. And to keep up morale he sends autographed pix of Zolar X, where he sits among his alien bandmates, staring at the camera cool and austere, *commanding* -- lip slightly snarled. Even on photocopied paper colored with magic marker, he has it: the X factor of Zolar X.

In 1973, the band was off to a rocky start. Zory (now Zory Glory), Ygarr, founding bassist Zany Zatovian and keyboardist Ed Dorn (Rojan) could not find a drummer. Broke, they were evicted from the house they shared in Laurel Canyon, and regrouped in the Bay Area. By October they'd found drummer Eon Flash, rehearsed intensely, and in November were ready. Zolar X amazed the local audiences with laser blasts of alien energy. They were booked at L.A.'s new Starwood club for a 2-week run beginning on New Year's Eve.

Zory rarely gets into specifics, but prefers to think back with fond vagueness. "We wore our togs 24/7," he sighs. "We made up our own language. We wrote symphonies and pop hits for another planet! We schmoozed with English and American popstars and rock legends. We were never out of character so we were the darlings of the Hollywood scene. All except for the cigar chomping pot bellied record execs."

Zolar X just could not score ■ record deal. But then, I am still not sure how well regarded they were at the time.

I ask around.

"I saw them play maybe six, seven times over the years," replies Dennis Cooper, the novelist. "You know, they weren't so great, in memory at least. They weren't well respected in either the glam or punk scenes. They were very marginal. Sonically, I remember them sounding a bit like early Tubeway Army, though not anywhere as good."

Lisa Fancher saw them at the Troubadour, but mostly recalls the spacemen on the streets of L.A. "They were always dressed to the nines in their get-ups no matter how much shit they caught from the locals," she says. "And it's not easy to stand out on Hollywood Blvd., let me tell ya!"

I believe her. Zolar X's major studio recordings were years away. Until then, they *stood out* on this rock spinning in space -- beautiful freaks!!

★★★★★★★

Zory, for sure, was ■ star on the rise who never quite rose. But he *was* a star. He posed for Norman Seeff, the famous rock photographer, who included a shot in his 1974 book, *Hot Shots*. So we find Zory nestled between snaps of Mick Jagger, Carly Simon and co. -- an alien boy lying ■■ his bed in full face paint, ■ perverse smile on his face as his hands creep near his crotch. I can see it in his eyes. No human would do for him. His affair is with the camera itself.

"I considered myself 'sexless,'" he writes. "I was an android and often passed on one-night stands. I was more into the mind. The soul. Art. Music. Poetry. Theater. Sex was actually superficial to me compared to these 'higher' pursuits.'" He counts up all sexual encounters he can recall. It's 47. Unlike Jobriath, Zory is "exclusively heterosexual" -- he was an alien, but not *that* alien. It's like he put all his energies into being himself. I get ■ snippet of video footage from the Troubadour show, taken from the audience. Zory *was* funny. He does a little alien dance and moves weirdly so it looks like he's floating. (Jobriath, by contrast, looks like a demon in hell.)

Zolar X could never quite be a joke band, as they were carried forward into ■ weird seriousness by Zory's presence. He always brings something odd & hypnotic to anything he does. In 1974, Zolar X recorded two songs including "Space Age Love" -- a different pressing than what appears ■ the CD. (They are considering a re-release of the 45.) The original is odd, for sure. Zory's voice is very high & clipped, like a mutant child. As always with Zolar X music the primary impression is of aggression. *Enraged fun.* It got some radio play but they were still a local, unsigned band – aliens wandering the streets, talking to themselves in a language nobody else could understand.

With a shifting line-up lineup (Ed Dorn was fired) they continued to play the L.A. area. In December 1974 they were at ■ rock festival at the Palladium, rubbing shoulders with the Stooges, the Dolls, etc.

From a review:

"Zolar X is considered pretty much a joke around Hollywood. Their gimmick is space-suit costumes with tendrils and a singer who sounds like he's on helium. The band features ■ guitarist who knows a few notes which he repeats in monotonous cascades, and a drummer who continually loses his 4/4 beat. As somebody remarked, 'without their echoplex, they'd be out of business.' They created a lot of noise, earned ■ few titters and scattered applause, and floated off."

They had their fans.

An L.A. cartoonist named Armando Norte *heard* about them and was naturally very excited. He showed up at the Troubadour concert, and met them backstage. Over the next years he drew cartoons for their publicity and lyrics: superheroes & sci-fi visions (some are in the CD packaging).

"Their look was *so* unique," Etron (as Norte is known) told me. "It wasn't what Bowie was doing, or the other glitter bands. It wasn't glam rock. It was a new flavor. I always felt, it's gonna take awhile before people catch up. They were seen more as ■ oddity."

He admits that Zolar X was, in fact, odd.

"Sometimes they'd walk around talking in an alien language. They'd be somewhere, and doing their own speech. It just made the whole experience that much stranger."

He laughs. He notes, as many do, that Ygarr was the musical backbone of the band. ("He could go on and on. It was like opening black holes.") But Zory was the theater! I ask for description.

"Somewhat *androidian?*" he says, searching for words. "He could turn it off ■ quick and become very... robotic. He could stare and hold ■ pose, and not move, and he knew everybody was watching him."

Etron warms up.

"He'd walk down Hollywood Blvd., and everyone would *stop*. He could walk into a building and *everybody* would turn. Once we went to the Rainbow Room. He was wearing a bright yellow body stocking, and it only had a little silver pocket right at the crotch, like V-shaped, it was metallic, and he had little silver shoes, soft and slip on. And those donut rings around his wrists. His make-up was always *perfect*. The girls were mesmerized. He was perfect on stage. He could have become an excellent actor. He could switch it on and off. I never saw him lose his temper or anything. He seemed gentle, like a gentle person."

For Etron Zolar X's story from 1975-1977 was of a band staging amazing concerts but slowly falling apart. Their concerts, at the Starwood or Rodney's (where they were a house band for awhile), were sci-fi extravaganzas with silver sets, neon and glitter, lasers & the rocking, dancing aliens. But Zolar X could not get signed, even when *Star Wars* ■■ huge. "The whole science fiction thing was just in air," Etron sighs. "It was the right time for them, but it just never happened."

The band did field a number of offers. The CD liner notes mention that a TV producer had wanted to make Zolar X into ■ television show, like *The Monkees*. Zory was in favor of the idea.

The Captain was outvoted.

Etron last saw Zory around 1980, when Zolar X was disbanding, unable to get new bookings. But he'd get updates on the former frontman.

"A lot of bad things happened after he left," he says, hesitatingly.

This is how it happened. Soon after talking to Etron I heard back from Zory's daughter, whom he'd asked me to contact. He hadn't heard from her in months, and was worried.

I stare ■ her note.

"There's just so many things about him that are evil that I'm kinda reluctant to have anything to do with him. He's an extremely talented con-artist and I don't want to be the one that falls for it."

I write back, feebly. Are we talking about *the same Zory Zenith??*

"OK, first of all please don't act like you know my father better than I do," she replies.

She's really angry.

"If you don't think he's ■ con, then it *worked* and he conned you into believing that he's ■ decent person. He had no chance of being one with his upbringing. Did you know he has *beaten* every woman he's ever been with? He beat my mother so severely when I was three and my sister was one that her eyes were swollen shut when she showed up at my grandma's house with myself and my handicapped sister in her arms barely able to stand... ??"

"Did you know that I would have had an older brother or sister by my mom if Billy hadn't beat it out of her and caused her to lose it??"

"Did you know that before I was born, one night he was drinking again, got pissed at my mother, picked up her cat, broke its neck and threw it out the window??? Hmmm, did ya know that great piece of info??? Did you know he was beating my mom one night, and my now step father came to help her and Billy pushed him down a flight of stairs and both his knees have been screwed his entire life and he just had a total knee replacement???"

She's almost finished.

"Billy is ■■ *entertainer*. He may be one of the most charismatic people you could meet and people always like him. He cons you into believing that he's just a great guy. And don't tell me he's not a con because I got that gene, I could make you believe anything I wanted to. I am A LOT like Billy and there is ■■ anger inside that is uncontrollable. Don't tell me it's alcohol... this was in him from the *beginning*."

★★★★★★★

I'm very upset and reread Zory's notes over and over. The peaceful alien, the mission to humanity, all that crap is going up in smoke. I suddenly wonder if there's a devious mind at work, not sweetly kooky but crazy and conniving. *Not* alien. Vintage *human*. I write him but prison mail can take two weeks or more. I'm left with his past, trying to understand it.

The time: 1975.

Zory is growing desperate. The apocalypse is drawing nearer, and he's done nothing to prevent it. "I read Hal Lindsay's *The Late Great Planet Earth*," he writes. "I took LSD. One night I flipped out and ran down Hollywood Blvd. in an orange lurex space suit screaming the world was coming to an end!"

He was arrested & thrown in the drunk tank.

Next: out driving on a desolate highway with his future first wife Karen, he got in a horrible car wreck. "We were ejected from the

vehicle as it flipped over three times. The auto landed on its roof and was crushed down to the seats!"

Suddenly a mysterious woman was at his side. "You're all right," she said. "Help is coming."

An ambulance arrived moments later. Zory believed she was an angel.

"This began my quest for God."

He and Karen were seriously injured, but they recovered & married soon afterward. "Unfortunately," Zory continues, "I continued to drink and smoke dope."

And beat her?

During this time, Zory was in & out of Zolar X. He alludes to being kicked out of the band several times, but never says why. The CD liner notes (by Chuck Nolan) say his behavior was "erratic." I ask Ygarr.

There's been a change.

Ygarr replies that he'd rather not answer, for fear of affecting Zory's legal appeals. "I could fill a chapter for you, but I want him out of prison first."

My impression is that Zory's "erratic" behavior undid many of Zolar X's commercial prospects. I'm told Ygarr was urged to go solo. I write him again.

He replies.

"I never really kicked him out, our managers did. I liked him up front. His act and his designs were needed, and he kept getting to be a better singer, plus I loved him like a brother! I feared him at times but that feeling never lasted."

In 1978, kicked out of the band, Zory moved to the Bay Area. He was 26. Newly married, with a family on the way, his rock career seemed behind him. He went to beauty school and did "promotional pantomime" on the side. He and his wife began attending church. But, as he says, "I would not repent of being a 'rock star, groupie-lovin' drunk! Only I was losing control. I was becoming early last-stage alcoholic. Violent. Crazy. Wild."

Other replies come in.

His history *mutates.*

The 'Billy McCartney' hoax was more elaborate than he'd let on. On the basis of his changed name and a forged photo (showing him and Paul McCartney with their arms around each other), Billy had gotten an endorsement deal, which was later revoked.

Violent scenes. Around 1975 Billy sat in a drummer with former members of Shady Lady. Karen was present. She left the room and came back. On her return Billy got up and began beating her savagely. The other players had to pull him off her and chew him out.

Billy & Karen divorced. They were to have three children. The first he apparently aborted by a beating. The second was the daughter I'd written, whom he saw infrequently – forgetting, or too drunk for the visitations.

His *third* daughter with Karen is severely mentally disabled, which may be attributable to Billy beating his pregnant wife. I'm told he refused all contact with the girl and claimed he could not have produced such a defective child. He's told me that he's paid a total of $18,000 in child support and is delinquent $18,000. I know in my bones he intended to pay for only one of the girls.

★★★★★★★

Ed Dorn, the original member of Zolar X, gives me more early history of the band. In the early 70s, he and Ygarr were a house band at a strip club in the Bay Area. They decided they'd better launch something big, and seized on the alien stuff.

I ask how much they *believed* in it.

"It kind of evolved," he replies. "We were looking for a schtick, I guess you would call it. Seemed like the thing to do."

They met Zory in L.A., and against Ed's wishes, accepted him as frontman. Ed thought Zory was a drummer.

"He'd sit down and, 'It goes like this' -- bang it right off. I was going, 'Why are we looking for a drummer? We've already got one. What we need to find is a better *singer*."

Ed never cared for Zory's voice.

"Too affected," he says. "In a way that was not his true voice. It was like something he'd put on."

Also, Ed thought they should only wear their costumes in concert. Zory wouldn't have it. Tensions escalated and their manager ("a doorman at the Starwood") threw Ed out.

Fast forward: 1978.

Ed answered the phone.

"*Owwww*, like what's *happening?*" the caller howled.

It was Zory! The two made up, and within a week had a new project: The Aurora Pushups. It was New-Wave Sci-Fi. With a home recorder they did two songs, Zory's "Angels on Runway 1," about an elite group of astronauts, and Ed's "Victims of Terrorism," which lately sounds rather spooky. ("Someday we all will be... victims of terrorism.")

They pressed 1000 45"s and almost sold out just in the local market. I get a copy. These should have been Zolar X songs. The sound is very poppy and fun, albeit low-fi. Zory sings lead on both tracks, but his voice is rawer than on the CD... *hesitant*?

"Suddenly we're getting all this airplay," Ed continues. "We're selling records. So, we better get a band! We assembled players and started rehearsing. But he wouldn't show up to rehearsals. His problem is he was drinking. It was a problem for a long time."

Ed returned the old favor. He fired Zory.

I ask if booze was really the problem, or if it masked a deeper one.

"It was there without the drinking," Ed sighs. "The drinking allows it to come to the fore. He has demons he can't seem to exorcise. What they are, I don't know."

★★★★★★★

I also get through to Stefen Shady, the lead singer of Shady Lady.

He thought, as a drummer, Billy had the potential to be one of the greats -- on the level of Keith Moon. Shady Lady worked with him a lot.

Stefen saw Zolar X up close.

"I thought it was developing," he says. "It was going to take a lot of money. And, this was the part I don't know if they could've handled: It was going to take direction from outside. Somebody they believed in, who had the power to mould them."

As we continue talking, I get a weird surprise. After Billy and Karen divorced, Karen and Stefen (not friendly until then) had married. *Stefen Shady* was the stepfather of Billy's daughters.

Relating these facts, his voice is calm, modest... fatherly.

"I don't know that I really succeeded in being a good father, or stepfather," he says. "But I had to be better than having no father."

Or, I add . . . having Zory.

The alien mystique withers in my mind, as I'm left with the pathetically human truth.

Who wants an alien as a dad?

I suddenly see in the E.T. fiction something I'd never seen before -- a flight from reality in a way that's hostile to earth, to fellow men, and women.

I probe Stefen about the scene Billy's daughter had mentioned -- pushing her stepfather down the stairs.

Stefen is defensive.

"Physically I could *beat* his butt," he replies. "I *never* felt fear of Billy. I'll tell you what happened to me. I just had one of my knees operated on. A total knee replacement. I'm having the other one done. The reason my knees are this way is because he was drunk, he broke a bottle and put it to my throat, slipped around behind me and put it to my neck, opened the door and kicked me from behind down some steps. When I landed, my knees were totally blown out. I had no insurance, I had no money to get an operation. Finally they did scope my knees to take everything out, but it was bone against bone for years."

(Very painful.)

"I didn't even charge him. The police came. His ex-wife, because he hit her, split her head open or something, she brought charges. I didn't bring charges. Of course I didn't know how much damage he'd done to me. And you know what? He never apologized. He doesn't acknowledge the shit that he does. I don't hate him for it. I didn't kill

him. I didn't cripple *him*."

★★★★★★★

Billy kept on, careening from one career to the next. While drinking, doing drugs, cutting hair at a posh salon and beating his wife, he started up a new career as a Christian evangelist. He refers to this career vaguely. "I preached on the streets in San Francisco with a bullhorn. The very heart of Sin City. Too bad my own heart wasn't in it."

Ed Dorn recalls the period.

"He used *religion* as a means of absolving himself from some of the things he'd done. I don't want to badmouth him, but he was in relationships with women in which he was abusing them, and then he'd go on church on Sunday and absolve his guilt."

The main name I have for this period is the pastor of Billy's Protestant church -- the man who, Billy says, is the friend who is cowriting *Chained to the World*.

I call him up.

Something is clearly wrong.

The man is embarrassed to be talking with me.

"What am I to talk about?" he says.

I don't quite know what to say. I ask if they were friends, or...

(pause)

"Well, he came and preached in our church and I knew him, you see, but I would not characterize him as a friend. His mother was a member of our church. I *wouldn't* characterize him as a friend."

(pause)

"Why is this of interest?"

Well, I say, Billy was a in a rock band.

"Yes," he replies.

They recently released their first CD, I add.

"Without him, of course."

"Well," I say, "they had these recordings which they'd been sitting on for 20 years..."

"Amazing."

He's not amazed.

"Yeah," I say. "I don't know if you knew this but for many years, Billy dressed like an alien."

(silence)

"You maybe *didn't* know that."

"No."

(silence)

"As an *alien?*"

"Yeah," I reply. "An alien." -- suddenly realizing how odd an alien is.

I ask for a description of Billy's preaching. He suggests I ask Billy. I ask again, nicely.

"I would say..." he begins. "Who is that comedian-- Robin Williams. He reminded me of Robin Williams preaching. You can imagine that could be quite entertaining, wouldn't it? But not preaching *wrong*. Preaching what I would consider to be the truth, but with different impersonations, a little Elvis, Groucho Marx, that sort of thing, thrown into one sermon. Which was quite... unique.

He warms up.

"I think that having failed at the entertainment industry, or not accomplishing what he wanted, he was now trying to do it in preaching. But he fuzzed out, back into drugs and all that, and was incarcerated and then rethinks it, and then it comes back together for him. That would be my guess."

"Were you aware," I ask, "of the situation with Billy's wives?"

"He was divorced," the pastor replies. "No, he was married when I met him."

"He was beating them."

"He was *what?*"

I feel suddenly embarrassed, or ashamed, that I've had anything to do with a man who seems clearly crazy and criminal, that I would ask *anyone* about him, think anything of him, tell anyone.

"He was beating them, pretty badly."

"He was *beating* them."

"Yeah."

(pause)

"Well," the pastor says on a note of conclusion, "Billy Myers is an interesting and a strange person.

"For sure."

"Is there anything else I can help you with?"

He wishes to get off the phone but I ask about a few items in Billy's letters. He says the pastor was writing & guiding him throughout the years.

Now I've done it.

The pastor starts to talk.

"You understand that I didn't hear from this man for a long time, from the middle '80s to the early 2000s. I didn't hear from him for 16, 17 years. All of a sudden he writes me from prison. He writes me *long* letters, because I think he's lonely and has few people to talk to, that sort of thing. I don't have *time* to answer him at length. I've sent him some of my books and I have acknowledged the fact that I have received his letters. I write *short* replies. And that's about it."

(silence)

"This is his last straw, so to speak."

I feel the same way.

★★★★★★★

Somewhere in various boxes in closets across the country, there's the remaining evidence of the later music of Zory Zenith. He calls it his "back catalogue." To anyone else it'd look like a bunch of dusty old tapes. Ed Dorn has some, including demos he's still fond of. There's a song called "Gibraltar Rock." Zory gave him a demo tape called *Future Shock in France*. Zory mentions a major work in the late 70s: a 17-minute, 4-part "pop epic" called "Judgement of Man." He says it should have been a major hit.

(He says that about all his stuff.)

Then there was the *surfer* Billy Myers. Pushing 30 and gaining weight, he took up surfing, and with collaborator Joel Veach did an album of "futuristic surf music" under the moniker The Freaking Tikis. (In 1994, famed surfer documentarian Bud Browne used one track, "The Green Room," in his movie *Surfing the '50s*.)

And Billy remarried, a woman named Mary. The word is he didn't beat her much. Stefen Shady met her. "She would've kicked his ass," he thinks. "Billy's *not* a tough guy. He's only tough to people who are weak, or he's a sneak attacker."

But despite relative career stability, fun on the waves and marital happiness... *artistically*, Zory Zenith was drifting.

He focused for his next act, however, on August 16, 1977.

Elvis Presley died.

I notice that Zory is very drawn to the deaths of superstars... after which he steps into their place? He began studying *rockabilly*. He calls himself a "time traveler," moving not into the future, this time, but the past. He latched onto Elvis's early Sun recordings and the next year emerged with his next major alter-ego: *Billy Bo Day and the Howlers*.

I call up a source he suggested for the period: Lloyd Pratt, the Billy Bo Day 'official photographer'.

Lloyd is shocked.

"*In PRISON??*"

But he laughs, and eases into his favorite Billy Bo Day stories.

"I remember one time I went over to his apartment. He'd built a little shrine to himself. He had ■ special little table, with ■ photo album of all the pictures I took. Then he had three 8x10s framed ■ the wall in a little triangle shape. He was ■ great customer. When you took pictures of him, he'd buy every other shot. Then when he got more money, he'd try to fill in every other one he didn't have. He loved pictures of himself."

Lloyd recalls a brief phase before Billy Bo Day, a Sci-Fi band where Billy & band were dressed in "these matching PVC outfits that made them look like space-age gas station attendants." They played a local club. In the middle of sets, Billy would pull out his Bible and read to the audience.

"He loved being on stage," Lloyd says. "I remember those rockabilly gigs. He'd always throw in something weird. They did 'Boogie Disease' and right in the middle, he started shaking. He'd go, 'I got the boogie, I got the boogie disease,' then shake, and then fall on the floor. He'd shake on the floor, then get back up. Hopping around. Little hops."

At one concert, Lloyd went backstage to Billy's dressing room to find Mary sitting alone crying.

"She was all pissed off because Billy was saying he wanted to keep their marriage ■ secret, because he thought he was going to be a big rock star, and he thought this would damage his attraction for women. I was like, 'Oh my god.'"

In ■ bid to make her husband jealous, Mary grabbed a male co-worker of Billy's, a hairdresser who was effeminately gay, and made him out ■ her new love interest.

"I was a real scene," Lloyd laughs. "And then Billy went out onstage and got the boogie disease."

★★★★★★★

Ygarr remained in the L.A. area, continuing on ■ a power trio called The Spacerz, with Zolar X members Eon Flash and Ufoian Ufar. I hear from a guy who caught one of their party gigs. "They played a hard, fairly complex, flashy space metal with probable nods to Bowie," he recalls. Their desire to release an album as Zolar X remained alive. In 1976 they did a major recording session in Memphis, to which Zory was not invited -- until the last minute, when he was. In 1979, Ygarr did another Zolar X recording session in L.A., in which Zory was not involved. The sound of these sessions does hint at punk, a driving, hectoring alien sound without a lot of emotional variation. It's weird, as among a pile of tapes I get, there's some of Ygarr's solo material from the period. It's softer & sweeter music, about -- ■ Zolar X songs are not -- male & female romances.

And Billy Bo Day was busy with his latest bid for superstardom. Having played locally, he was ready for the big time.

Vegas.

"I became the toast of the rockabilly west coast!" he exclaims in one letter. Or, "the west coast's premiere rockabilly star," he says in the biography from his defunct website.

I ask Lloyd Pratt.

"It was a cheesy little lounge act in a place called the New Frontier, down ■ the end of the old strip," he says. "They made him turn down the volume since they didn't want to distract from the gambling."

Billy Bo Day was alive, I guess, for seven years, none of which was stable employment, and during which Zory intensified his substance abuse, had lots of affairs and fell away from his un-heartfelt religion. He was growing old.

I have some live tapes of Billy Bo Day concerts, which seem like fairly standard genre performances, albeit with Zory's odd alien voice. It wasn't greatness, for which he had only one opportunity in the course of his musical life. It came in 1980, when Ygarr had a final change of heart, firing Zolar X's manager in order to take Zory back. They regrouped for a final recording session in San Francisco. These six songs, four with Zory on lead, are the backbone of the CD, praised most often in reviews. It was true alien rock, a weird, fast but modulated, comic, and always strangely violent wall of sound. In Zory's voice the hesitation and mimicry was gone. He was, however briefly, himself. A star.

★★★★★★★

Finally I hear back from him, his delayed response to his daughter's charges. "I must say, I'm in ■ bit of shock," he begins. He hems and haws self-defensively. He regrets all his marriages. ("I should never have married any of them!") He moans. "I don't really deserve any of you to love me." He despairs. "I have been a fool. Drunken. Violent. Evil. Wicked. An adulterer. A liar. *But ■ has everybody else!*"

The punchline: "The events she related were true but with ■ one-sided 'relish' obviously from her mother."

His next flurry of letters have a new tone. He's very busy with his plans for new Zolar X products. The "Timeless" CD is selling well (though they haven't received royalties yet). Zory plans to gather his scattered "past catalogue" and package it as a CD. He fiddles with titles, settling on *Zory Zenith: Singles*. He's set a release date of May 2006, not ■ all discouraged by the current lack of tapes, a record contract, etc. He also lays the groundwork for a future CD, his longtime dream of recording a souped up, hi-fi album of rocked up classic hymns, for which, naturally, he'll tour.

"Pray, and *advertise*," he says.

But there is an undertone of suspicion, building into a paranoia at my research. "You can feed ■ all the DIRT on me floating out there," he says. "I'll be glad to answer all of it. *In my book*." He writes dirt in return about those he suspects are informing on him. He speaks increasingly of his book -- now re-titled back to *The Greatest Performance Never Played*. It will expose his enemies. It will lay them flat. It will be the vessel for all the rage and bitterness of his life.

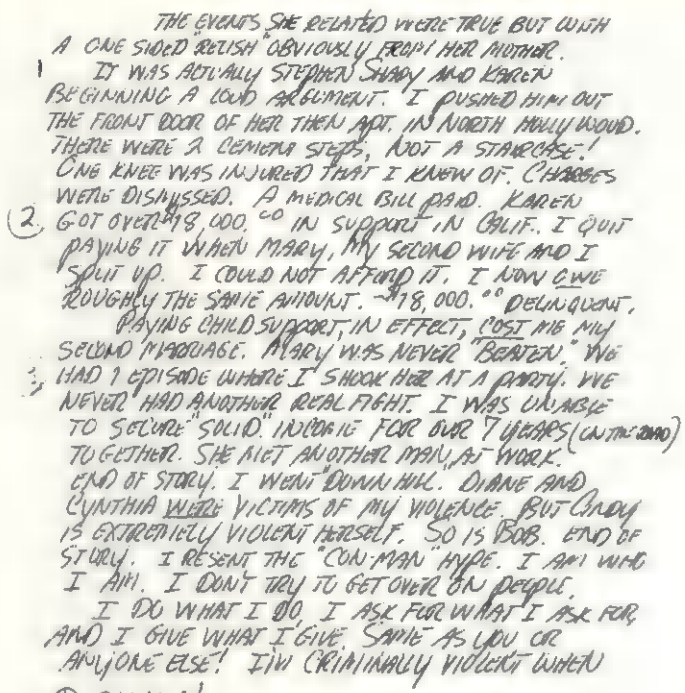
When addressing his letters now, I am no longer 'Zaanan'. He questions my profile of him. Friends, and bandmates, do not "turn tale" on each other. He worries, not for his own sake, but for the band's! Ygarr's upcoming reunion tour could be harmed. "The more negative publicity about *me*," he whispers, "the more uphill it gets for *them*."

He's now on a series of medications with huge names, which he reports matter-of-factly, ■ his tone shifts even more wildly than before -- from a hushed, almost childlike wish to please me to an angry attack mode, enraged rivers of words directed at me and nobody. "So hate me, vilify me, *crucify me in print!* Do whatever suits your tainted imagination folks! Every true rock 'n' roller *lives* it. So they're either dead, dying, or *in prison!!!* Wake up fools! The music you claim to 'love' only proves what true *hypocrites* you really are!"

He then changes pens, calls me "beloved," and explains that I'd just been hearing "Zory" talk.

"If you want to focus ■ *him*, I can give you all you can take."

★★★★★★★


THE EVENTS SHE RELATED WERE TRUE BUT WITH A ONE SIDED RELISH OBVIOUSLY FROM HER MOTHER.
1 IT WAS ACTUALLY STEPHEN SHADY AND KAREN BEGINNING A LOUD ARGUMENT. I PUSHED HIM OUT THE FRONT DOOR OF HER THEN APT. IN NORTH HOLLYWOOD. THERE WERE A CEMENT STEPS, NOT A STAIRCASE! ONE KNEE WAS INJURED THAT I KNEW OF. CHARGES WERE DISMISSED. A MEDICAL BILL PAID. KAREN
(2) GOT OVER $8,000.00 IN SUPPORT IN CALIF.. I QUIT PAYING IT WHEN MARY, MY SECOND WIFE AND I SPLIT UP. I COULD NOT AFFORD IT. I NOW OWE ROUGHLY THE SAME AMOUNT. ~$8,000.00 DELINQUENT, PAYING CHILD SUPPORT, IN EFFECT, COST ME MY SECOND MARRIAGE. MARY WAS NEVER "BEATEN." WE HAD 1 EPISODE WHERE I SHOOK HER AT A PARTY. WE NEVER HAD ANOTHER REAL FIGHT. I WAS UNABLE TO SECURE "SOLID" INCOME FOR OVER 7 YEARS (ON THE BAND) TOGETHER. SHE MET ANOTHER MAN AT WORK. END OF STORY. I WENT DOWN HILL. DIANE AND CYNTHIA WERE VICTIMS OF MY VIOLENCE. BUT CINDY IS EXTREMELY VIOLENT HERSELF. SO IS BOB. END OF STORY. I RESENT THE "CON-MAN" HYPE. I AM WHO I AM. I DON'T TRY TO GET OVER ON PEOPLE. I DO WHAT I DO. I ASK FOR WHAT I ASK FOR AND I GIVE WHAT I GIVE. SAME AS YOU OR ANYONE ELSE! I'M CRIMINALLY VIOLENT WHEN DRUNK!

Zolar X was over in 1981. Live gigs had dried up. Zory returned to Billy Bo Day gigs. I get ■ videotape of a 1985 concert. It's surreal seeing the alien in Elvis drag -- a black-haired, squatty, hip-shaking, sweating hillbilly with pale skin and weirdly intense eyes. He introduces his band by name, and then himself.

"I'm whoever you want me to be."

The bass player in the Howlers was Alan Barrantine. Weirdly, he's now big in Christian prison ministries. He sighs at the news of Billy's current residence.

"I told him one of these days, that's what's going to happen. The drugs, the alcohol. He always had alcohol problems. I took him to detox twice."

He thinks over Billy's career.

"He always *believed* he should have been David Bowie. He believed he should have been a major star. And as much as a lot of his stuff was good... the people who make it are good business people. Billy was not."

The end of the classic Howlers lineup came when Barrantine financed a recording session for an album. He had a studio lined up, and backup players flown into town. The day they were to start, Billy arrived, he says, "very drunk," and proceeded to make havoc -- damaging microphones and throwing a guitar at the drummer.

Barrantine quit, and moved away. But he kept up with Billy as a friend. "He called me from California saying he was so drunk he thought he was going to die," he recalls. Flying down from Seattle, he drove Billy back to his home. Shortly afterward, Billy headed back south, and resumed drinking.

Unable (unwilling?) to work a regular job, Billy's wife Mary left him for another man. I talk with Scott Noel, or Qazar, erstwhile member of Zolar X, who roomed with Billy in San Francisco in the early 80s. Naturally, they decided to form ■ band. Assembling the players, Qazar booked studio time to record a demo.

"The rehearsal the night before went solid as a rock," he says. "Everyone was in top form. Zory had been growing his hair back out to its original Zolar X platinum point. It was gorgeous! He shows up at the studio the next day in ■ pair of white stretch pants, mime slippers, a red and white striped t-shirt, and black beret. His hair was cut, creased back and dyed chocolate brown and he even drew ■ pencil-thin mustache above his lip. The whole session went right in the shitter!"

Just when one character seemed to be gelling into place, Zory would whirl into the next one. "I never saw Billy Bo Day," says Qazar, "but I saw a shitload of other characters come out of him in his quest to find the right performance vehicle."

Qazar pauses.

"I recall these stories with a fair amount of mixed emotion," he says. "Especially now, knowing the result. But at the time, it was just another day in rock n roll."

But at some point... the music stopped.

There were ■■ more bands. Billy moved to Half Moon Bay, and married a secretary. "Deliciously sexy, smart and beautiful," he says. He beat her and she fled to her parents near Eugene, Oregon.

He followed.

★★★★★★★

The final act for the artist formerly known as Zory Zenith begins in 1991, when he arrived in Oregon to find out, very weirdly, that his third ex-wife did not wish to reconcile. ("We were better off as friends," he says.) He continued in Eugene, living in an R.V. behind a Baptist church, cutting hair at a mall salon, and drinking. "I stayed alone for two years," he says. "Heartbroken. Lonely. Suicidal."

And there, in Eugene, he met the *third* greatest love of his life, after alcohol and Jesus. "She was ■ female composite of me," he says, his tone quickening in excitement. "A drinker. A drugger. A rock 'n' roller. A party animal. And she was *violent*. Two inches taller than me with ■ mean right cross."

It was like Romeo and Juliet, with the addition of booze, illegal drugs, animal sex, domestic violence, cops, three stepchildren and regular visits to prison and church. He beat her and she beat him. They were in love. Her name was Cindy.

And his music was re-awoken.

The salon where Billy worked was owned by the wife of Gary Hill, who owned a recording studio in Eugene. It wasn't long before they teamed up to record the planet's first Billy Bo Day solo CD.

I talk with Gary Hill. His voice is old like a mountain, and calm. He tells me about his long history in music, working for Jerry Lee Lewis and the King Family. Members of the Grateful Dead live nearby and play at his birthday parties.

He liked Billy's music. He enjoys talking about Billy in general.

"Definitely unique. He still wears the white suede shoes and the hair combed back, the collar turned up. He *lives* that part. It's not just a part that he plays, it's a part that he lives. He *is* rockabilly. You see him walking down the street, you'd think it's still 1950-something."

He laughs, and describes how their music started. "He'd come over, do a little recording here and there. We have enough songs for an album."

It's titled *Blonde With Legs*. Billy plays almost all the instruments himself, from guitar to drums, and vocals. It's mostly rockabilly. There's one gospel number, for which Gary plans to add in a female singer to make it a duet. But most of it was nearly finished when Billy was thrown in prison.

Gary has the Zolar X CD, and is amused by it. "It's better than I expected it to be," he says. "You hear Billy. But it's such a different kind of music. It's been quite an evolution."

He sighs.

"If he can get away from the alcohol. That's the main thing right there. And he needs to stay away from his wife. Those two are poison to each other. About the only reason he married her in the first place is because she looks like the twin sister of his other wife. He wants all his wives to look alike."

"Blonde?" I ask.

"Yeah," Gary replies. "And they aren't even real blondes. But this alcoholism is the thing that's really got him."

The time: early 2002.

Billy's marriage was spinning out of control. "It was a blur of parties, work, kids, soccer, school events, jail, beach trips, kids, cops, parties, jail and probation and more jail!" he says. "Cindy and I split up to appease everyone else."

A court-ordered separation was also there in the mix.

Billy lived in his van and at friends' houses, notably his best friend,

Bob, who lived several houses down from Cindy's house. The three fell in together. Zory would sneak to be with Cindy, and Cindy would sneak to be with Bob. One night when she and a drunk Billy were alone, she taunted him with the affair.

Billy attacked her.

In county prison, he says he became ■ Christian. He was sentenced to 15 years. It was reduced down to 36 months probation and a fine.

He was released. "I was sick. A -walking talking rock n' rollin' DEAD MAN."

Two days later he showed up at Bob's to find Cindy there.

The two men fought. Zory smashed a bottle over Bob's head.

Here is where he is pinning his legal hopes. He says it was self-defense. I consider researching more, calling Bob & Cindy, but the motivation is gone. All I can say is that, in the moment of fighting like an animal with another man over ■ female, the alien Zory Zenith became, for the first time, completely, 100% *human*.

★★★★★★★

June 18, 2005: Zolar X has just given its first reunion concert, in San Jose to a large, enthusiastic audience. Ygarr sang lead, with Eon Flash and a new guy named Jett Starr. "Friend of mine from the Bay Area went," says Lisa Fancher, "but I haven't gotten a full report yet."

There's a few reviews on the Internet.

"They came out in new costumes, nothing really special, black tights with glittery rings around the arms, legs and waist and the name, ZOLAR X, embroidered across the front," says one. "Who knows if they will ever be heard from again, but I now can say I got to see this band before they left again for their home planet!"

Ygarr has a couple interviews in various newspapers. The frontman coming into his own, at last? "I have enough music for 15 new CD's at the moment," he says.

Memories of the original band continue to filter in. I hear from Danny Wilde, formerly of the Quick and the Rembrandts.

"Are you kidding?" he exclaims in his California surfer's voice. "*Yeah!* We used to see them at the Starwood all the time. They tripped me out. They had *full-on* production. For a kid from the valley to go in and see these guys with a light show, and god, all those crazy-looking guitars and weird chrome outfits. It was *awesome*, like pre-KISS, you know what I mean?"

I do.

Then Jenny Lens, the L.A. photographer who shot Zolar X in concert, and let them practice in ■ house she owned.

"They did not impress me," she says. "I was not into their music at all -- or them. There just wasn't anything for me to relate to on a human or musical level."

Once they were rehearsing so loud, the neighbors called the cops.

I keep hoping to find women who like Zory's music. I play it for a girl at work who likes classic rock. She flips through the CD liner notes and turns away dismissively.

"They look like *wimmin*."

Zory doesn't anymore, if he ever did. I get his latest prison mug shot. Heavy-set and pale, with facial hair, the alien is gone. If his cancer stays in remission he'll get out on May 20, 2012. Under Oregon's strict sentencing, there is no chance for early release.

I don't really know how to end with him. Our letters have ceased. I flip through them, hoping for some alien intelligence to break through and say it was all somehow worthwhile. It's so easy to get sick of humanity, that anything alien -- anything at all -- is a relief. I go see the new *War of the Worlds* movie, but I just find myself rooting for the Martians. Except they die of earth's diseases before they have a chance to wipe out humanity. I guess that's what our planet has going for it. We have the best bugs.

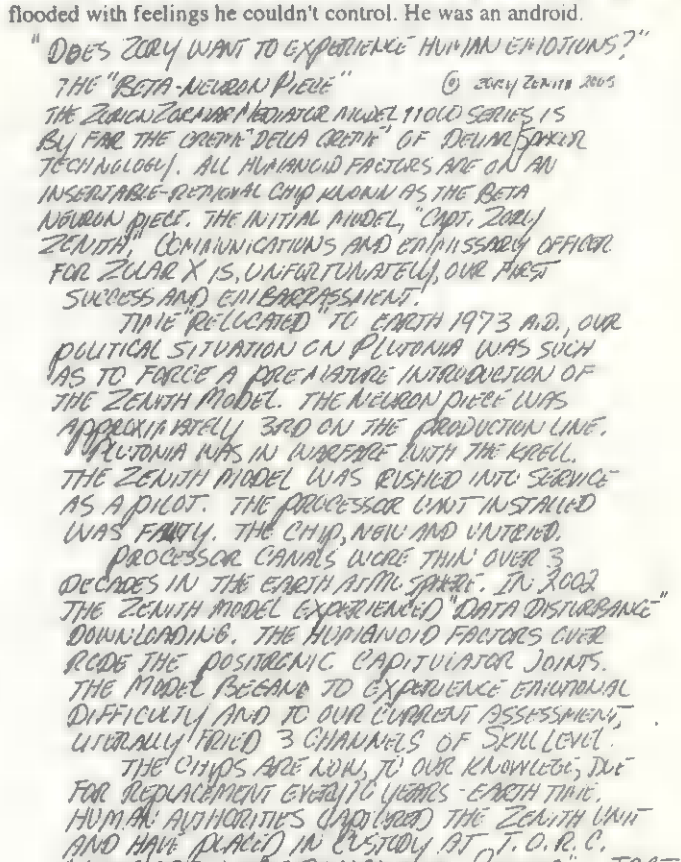
I end up putting aside all the other papers, and thinking about a piece of paper I haven't mentioned yet. It was an answer Zory sent me to one of the first questions I asked him. His reply was one of the most bizarre things I'd ever seen in my life, so I'd really wanted to include it.

He'd written my question at the top of the page. "*Does Zory want to experience human emotions.*"

The answer is ■ memo. It's titled "The Beta Neuron Piece," and is supposedly written by the scientists of planet Plutonia. They describe the creation of the Zorion Zormar Mediator model 11000 as "our first success and embarrassment."

They were forced to release him too early. Plutonia was at war with "the Krell." They had no choice. They rushed him into service, and sent him off to earth, even though they knew his "beta neuron chip" was faulty. This was the chip that allowed him to feel.

So they watched, and still watch their creation from afar in space, and noted that in the year 2002 his "positronic capitulator joints" began to fail. In other words, "The model began to experience emotional difficulty." His mechanical brain began to fry as he was flooded with feelings he couldn't control. He was an android.



There's lots of details. Zory really is kind of crazy. But it's all there, really.

He emerged from two races at war -- men, and women.

His ability to feel was damaged. He functioned best when he had no feeling at all, and when he was making rock music, as rock is the music we love the best, as it's the shape of the earth, and the density of the human heart. To be both unfeeling and to channel in his body & voice the savage powers of the cosmos. Zory Zenith: rockstar.

In jail, when he was left alone with himself, Billy Myers, he had a breakdown, as anyone does, when they're alone.

He says that's when he finally accepted Jesus. I believe him. I can't see what Jesus would want with any of us, but maybe He does. It's not like aliens want us. They don't even bother to attack. Sometimes, maybe, they show up here and there for a split second, and then they're gone. They came all this way, millions of miles, and when they get here they're embarrassed to be seen. But you can't blame them. It's not like there's intelligent life on this planet. We kill our own aliens. We're aliens to ourselves.

If I were them, I'd cruise right along to the next world. I hope they do.

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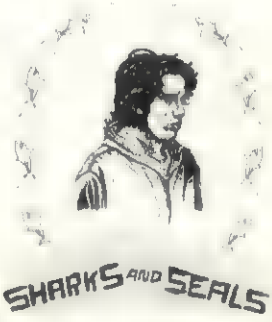

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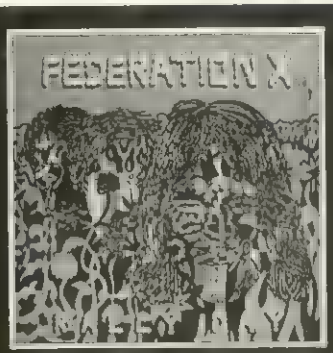

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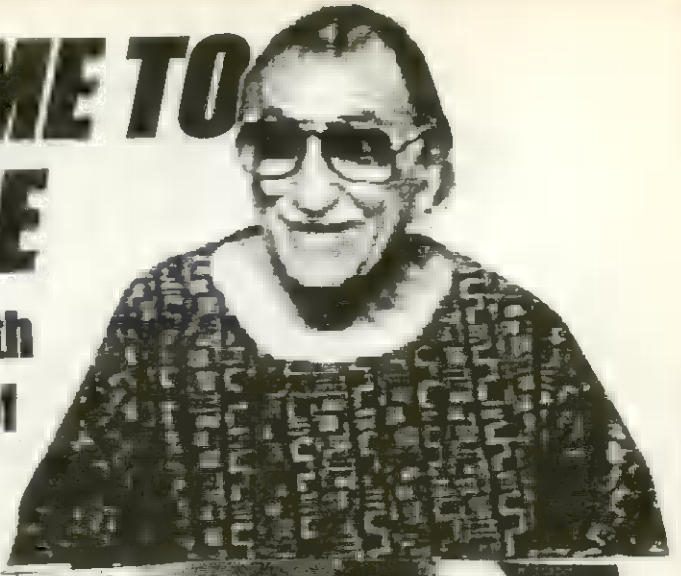
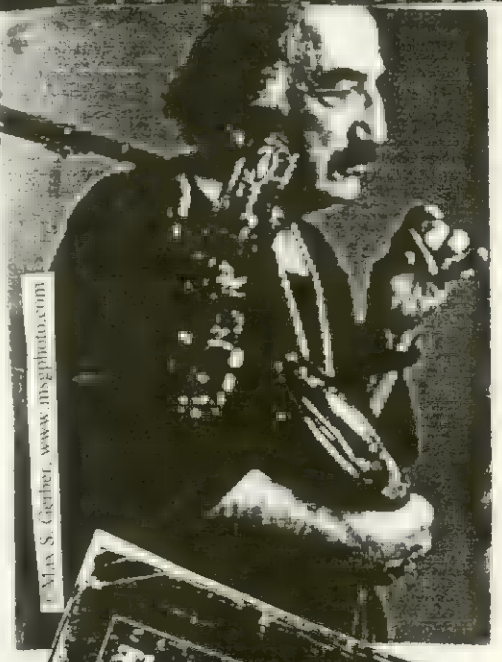
THEY ALL CAME TO SEE WILLIE

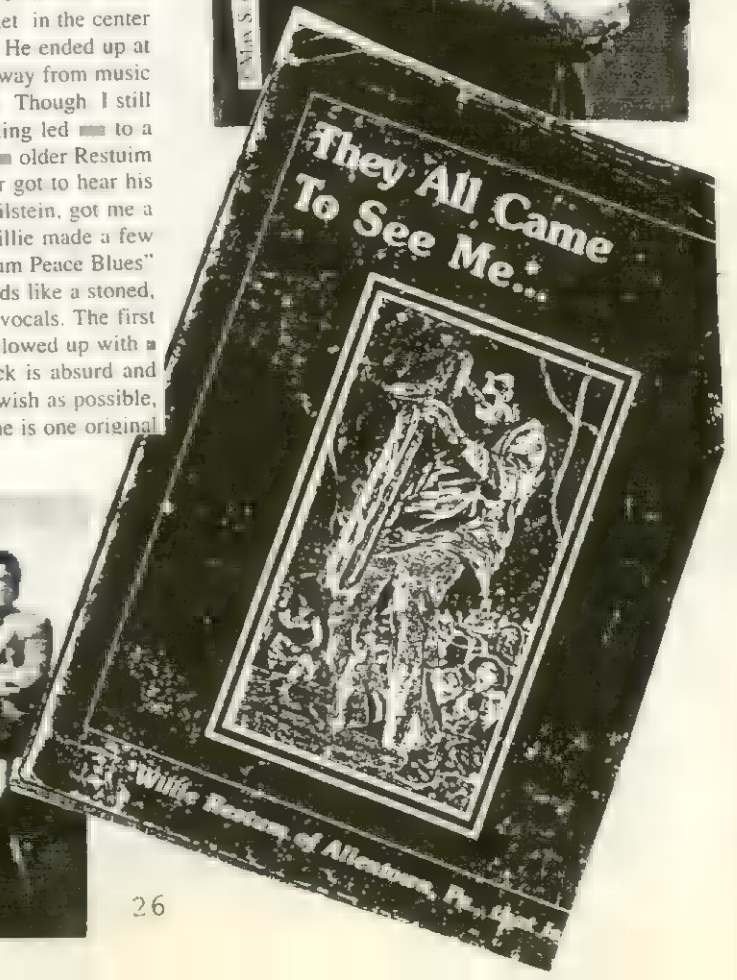
Getting Down with Willie Restum of Allentown



Introduction by Jake Austen

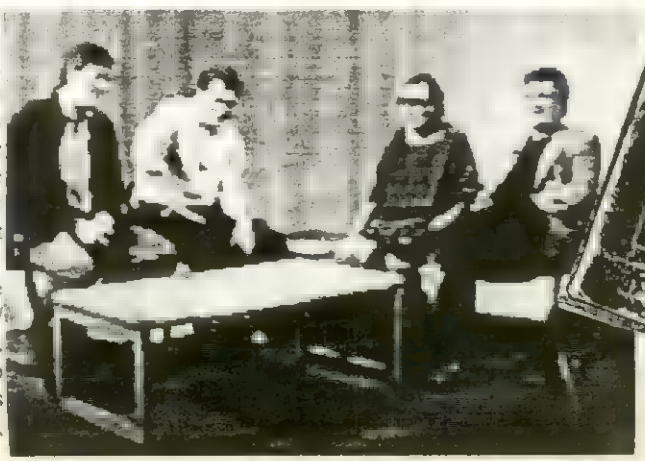
So often we hear amazing rare records and wonder what the story is behind them, but Willie Restum came to us from the other direction. Our fine L.A. friend Art Fein picked up a ragged copy of Restum's mid-80s' book, They All Came to See Me... and lent me the book not because he had read it but because the bulk of the tome features dozens of blurry photos of an oddly dressed Semite hanging out with the biggest stars of the 50s and 60s. It seems Mr. Restum was a Miami Beach after-hours superstar at the Dream Lounge for ten years starting in the mid 50s. This entertainer's entertainer had a decade he is so proud of that he put together this photo album of those glory days, supplemented with a short history, the bulk of which is just Willie telling us what a dream his tenure at the Dream was. He also relays his intriguing biography. Restum grew up in a Lebanese-American household amongst the Pennsylvania-Dutch in the working class town of Allentown, Pennsylvania. Drawn to jazz music he picked up the saxophone as a young man (eventually settling on the hefty baritone sax) and his love affair with the stage began in earnest in college when he entertained the kids by becoming the 1940s jazz equivalent of the frat rock r&b bands of the 60s. He developed a style of crowd-pleasing showmanship akin to Louis Prima's (he called it "Happy Jazz"), and also developed a bizarre personal style wearing Bermuda shorts in the days before grown men wore short pants, and strange smock-like shirts his momma made him (many with a pocket in the center – Willie writes that Sinatra had Mrs. Restum make him one of these odd blouses). He ended up at his awesome Florida gig, and after that played Chicago, and L.A., finally moving away from music to explore his expressionist side, painting and opening an art gallery in Tinseltown. Though I still hadn't heard a note of his music I knew we needed Willie in *Roctober*. A Googling led me to a photographer named Max Gerber who had shot Willie a decade ago. The photo of an older Restuim was so remarkably soulful that I knew I was going to do this story even if I never got to hear his tunes. But luckily just as Gerber gave me a phone number , Br. Cleve, via Phil Milstein, got me a copy of Willie's live Dream Lounge album. Never a successful recording star, Willie made a few albums and number of singles, the best of which was his 1954 Capitol single "Restum Peace Blues" b/w the great "One Note Boogie." "Restum Piece" is a raw, bizzaro slab that sounds like a stoned, sleepy strip club band bumping and grinding away, until Willie kicks in with the vocals. The first verse likely sounded like Martian to most listeners, but it was actually Arabic. Followed up with a verse in Pennsylvania –Dutch (sounding to all the world like Yiddish), the track is absurd and sublime. Speaking of Yiddish, Willie played up his Semetic looks by acting as Jewish as possible, even referring to his style of banter with the audience as "kibbitzing." Basically, he is one original





This page (clockwise from upper left): Young Willie, Willie today, Willie in 1998 (photo by Max S. Gerber), Willie's great book, *Art Fein's Poker Party* (l. to r. Eric Boardman, Dick Blackburn, Willie, Art Fein).

Facing page (clockwise from l.) Willie w/ Sammy, Shecky Greene, Alan Sherman, jumbo pro wrestler Haystacks Calhoun, Judy Garland, Satchmo



dude, and the fact that his music was as good as his photos was astounding. Here's where the story gets circular. The ancient phone number was still good, and it turns out Restum was still in Los Angeles. I passed the info on to Fein, who started this whole quest, and earlier this year Art, along with his Restum-fan buddies Eric Boardman (a great TV announcer) and filmmaker/actor Dick Blackburn (*Eating Raul*) invited Willie to be a guest on Fein's longstanding cable access program *Art's Poker Party*. Here is an edited transcription of that historical (hysterical) show:

Art Fein: Next to me I've got saxophone player and world wide famous entertainer, Willie Restum. Willie, I was first captivated by the photos in this book. You got to meet lots and lots of big stars of the late 50s and early 60s. The place you played was the Dream Lounge in…

Willie Restum: In Miami Beach.

AF: Quite obviously yours was the place to come to when you were in Miami.

WR: Well it was there ten years. I was holding down the fort and everybody wa s there until 5 O' clock in the morning. Even after the midnight supper club shows ended they came up. And they were all there. And when I say that it sounds like a braggart situation, but it's the truth. Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin Sammy Davis, they all came there. Frank, he was the mentor, he was in charge. He came up there every night, Well not every night…sometimes we would get a phone call, "Is so and so there…yeah? Well then forget about it." They didn't want to get involved in any nonsense. We were there till 5 ■ clock in the morning.

EB: Seven days a week.

Seven days a week. And they all came there to see me, but they also came there to see Sinatra and Sammy Davis *(in the audience)*. It was a great time for me, and it was a great place. My Italian bosses, god bless them, nobody could beat them. When they found out a broad was trying to work the bar, she was out, *out*. And the tough guys, they stood firm. It was ■ clean operation and that's why we stood there that long. I was kibitzing and playing tunes and playing standards, it was just a fun place. The football players during the winter season, guys would come up, Paul Horning and guys like him would sing on stage with me. The whole thing it was a kibbitz. The whole world of entertainers were in Miami Beach those years.

Eric Boardman: Willie, describe the band they came to see…

WR: They came to see this hooked-nosed Arab wearing short pants. Look at these knees.

Dick Blackburn: They're still pretty.

I started wearing shorts and I never faltered, never went back.

DB: But you had trouble with your band members, they didn't want to wear Bermuda shorts.

You read well. No they didn't want to but then they both got drunk, no they both got stoned, and…but they never really had to wear them anyway I decided I would just play the role

AF: You were playing baritone sax, a big heavy thing

Baritone sax was my instrument and I played it from the day I started, and I will until the day I fall.

DB: I want to ask something about your single…

EB: I must have played it 800 000 times.

(The single "Restum Piece" with its Arabic lyrics plays)

That means "hello, how are you" in Arabic, and the next phrase is Pennsylvania Dutch.

DB: What did they say at Capitol when you cut that?

Oh they ate it up

EB: Was there ■ big Arabic audience

Big Arabic audience? It was a big kosher, plus all the incidentals!

AF: You're of Lebanese extraction, but you were born in Allentown.

Allentown, Pennsylvania

AF: And it really is your name, Restum.

R-E-S-T-U-M.

AF: So did you meet any girls at all?

Oh come on…I had no problems with the women.
EB *(points to the shorts and odd shirt)*: So that look gets girls?
You got to work it good.
DB: What musicians did you listen to when you were coming up?
Oh all the Jazz men. Charlie Parker, Charlie Ventura, Coleman Hawkins. Then they all came there and I started to get them to play in the club. It was just a great place. And I couldn't do anything wrong.
AF: You worked Chicago?
Le Bistro.
AF: Down on Rush Street.
Yeah. When I left the Dream Lounge I got a phone call, "Hello Willie, this is Frank Sinatra." Well I froze, I even got the goosebumps now thinking about it. "Well, what are you doing, we want you to play at the Cal-Neva Lodge?"
EB: The famous Cal-Neva Lodge in Lake Tahoe!
Well, I said, if it's all right with my bosses it's all right with me, and he said, "I respect that." They thought about it and I would work the Cal-Neva for the Summer then I went out to Chicago.
DB: And you made records for Capitol and Columbia.
And Roulette and Gone. It was so long ago. I'm 75 now — I shouldn't have said that, some young girl might have thought I was a young man.
DB: I'll tell you when I first heard that Capitol record, I said 'Wow, what is this wild stuff' Who is doing this stuff? You're singing in Arabic and then you go into Pennsylvania Dutch…
EB: And the baritone saxophone we don't hear as a lead instrument too much, so that was a different sound.
It was a horn and I just played it.
EB: But you didn't play in the lower register…
No, in the middle. It was the sound, me and the sound, the sound and me.
EB: So Willie, are you still playing?
No, I put it away in my sax case and let it lay. I had my little gallery in L.A., which is now nonfunctioning as well
AF: You had a gallery of what?
Selling my art. What else you gonna do? But L.A. is another place, another story. I made my mark out here playing at the Playboy Club. I was out there three and half years, then I went away and came back and stayed another year.
EB: When you came out to L.A. did you get to see Gerry Mulligan play at the Hague, he made baritone sax a big deal.
I couldn't get a chance to go hear him, I played til 4 o' clock in the morning. But Gerry Mulligan heard me…he came into the Playboy Club and he was sitting about where you are. And I'm playing with my eyes closed and he says, 'Well let me blow the horn a little bit," and I go, 'What?' 'Let me play the horn a little bit," and I looked and it was Gerry Mulligan, and I went *(gestures handing a horn over)*. I was like (sings) "Take my horn…I'm a stranger in paradise!" He played "Sunnyside of the Street" and I sang a chorus with him in and out and we just bopped and had a go.
EB: Willie, they all came to see you…how does that make you feel?
Well it makes me feel pretty good. I mean, I know why I'm there, but I want people to tell me why I'm there. And it's just a gratification, You see people and they're moving around and your playing…and there I was.
AF: If your old friends want to find you…
I'm still over on La Cienga
DB: By the Car Wash?
By the car wash.
EB: *(listening to "Restum Peace Blues" playing as the outro music):* Willie, this is exciting, dangerous music.
I'm a dangerous guy.

Willie w Frank and Dino, Ali and Elvis

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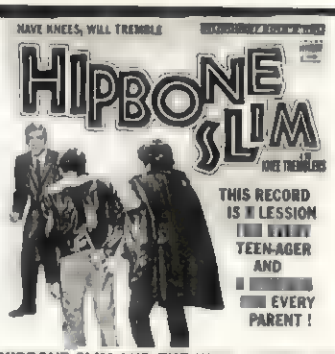

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It's a and crazy mixture of Traditional Rockabilly, Swamp 60's that makes your shake legs tremble

THE GUILTY HEART
'same' LP/CD (VR1227 / VRCD27)
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primitive, lo-fi combo is made up generations of native Angelinos steeped in the city's culture, angst, and Senac, having co-founded cow-punk innovators on the also heard records by Crowbar Salvation/Marty Nation Ace Ford (Child Molesters), Loafin' Hyenas (w/Rob Ritter Tex Edwards, Click Morte) Edgar Rodriguez, Rippers) . The Rippers were a short Los Angeles that appeared on the L.A. Shakedown compilation, Leon "Catfish" Zalez, the youngest member of the Guilty Hearts, also did time in The Rippers. He brings the his wild guitar, his tortured words screaming harp.
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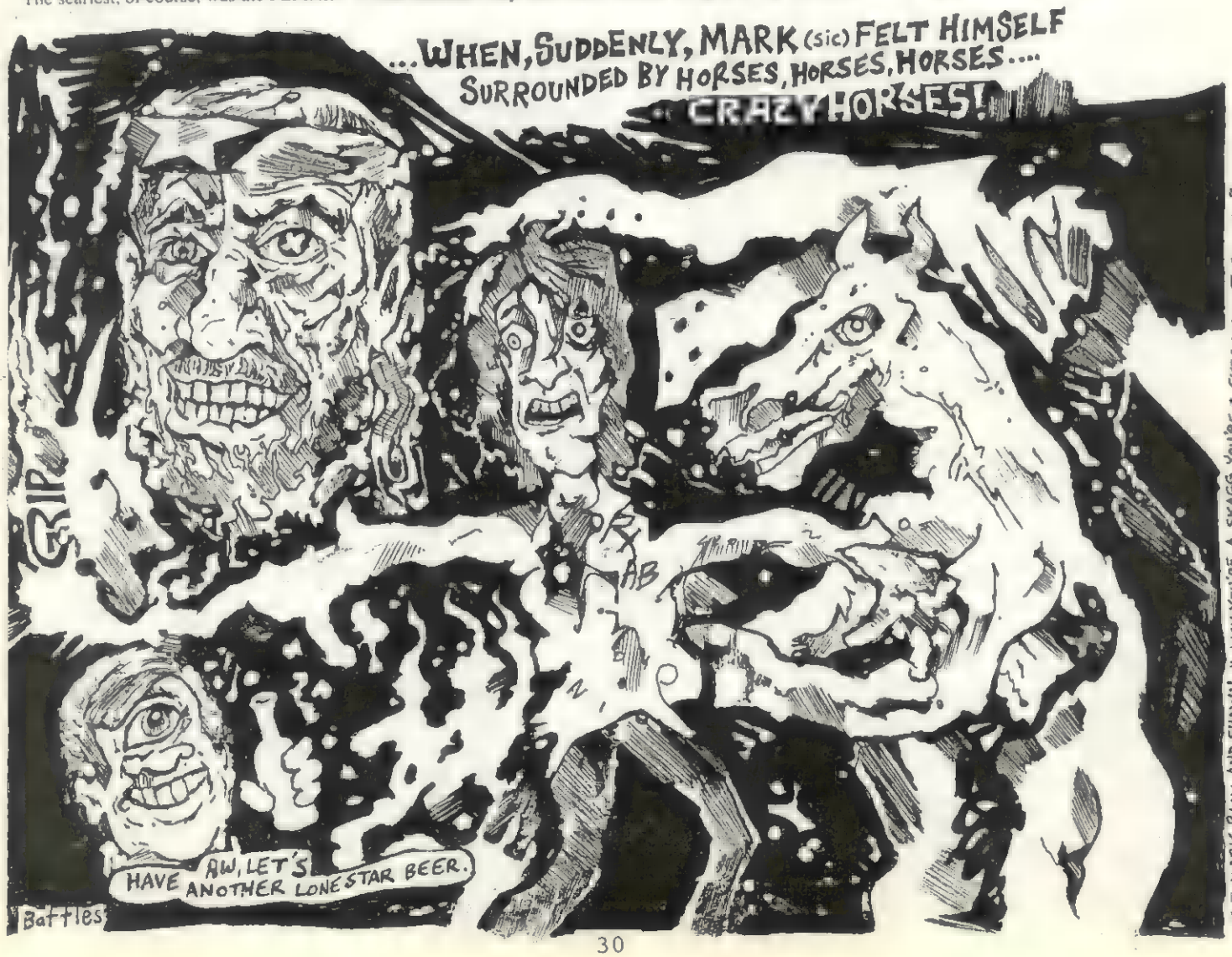
My Wedding With Willie

By Mark Benham, told to John Battles

" It all started when my friend Rob contacted me asking if I'd like to do a gig with him as a photographer's assistant. I told him I didn't know anything about it, he said, 'I'm just joking with ya, I just need somebody to basically lug around my equipment. I've been picked to do a photo spread over at Willie Nelson's property,' which is the property he eventually lost in the IRS grab. He said, 'Willie's hosting a wedding for one of his favorite roadies. After we get through, it'll be pretty much all the beer we can drink.' We went to the place, it was on the outskirts of Austin, near Johnson City. The wedding was being held in a church that used to be in Blue Rock, Arkansas. Willie Nelson, earlier in his career, bought all the buildings in a little ghost town in Arkansas called Blue Rock, and literally took all the old Western buildings, including the church, and moved them down to Texas, onto his property. While we were there, waiting for his contact, we got to walk through the buildings, and you could recognize the bar scenes from the little self-made movies he used to make with a couple of his buddies. It had all of the authentic wallpaper, which was pretty much just newspaper that was glued to the walls from way back when, so, it was pretty interesting to go through and read all the little stories and stuff from back in the 1890s. Then, his contact came through, and said, "Listen, we're going to do some REALLY private shoots of Willie and his daughters, who are going to be bridesmaids." There was a problem, at that point. On the ranch, Willie had a number of horses that he just let go wild. They had the run of the town, so, they were used to being able to walk in and out of buildings with no interference from people, so, my first job as photo assistant was to guard the church, which they had adorned with flowers and stuff, which they didn't want the horses to eat or mess up. So, my job, having had no previous experience with horses, was to keep the horses out of the church. Pretty soon, I'm learning how to tell a horse, "No," but that was pretty much just me holding my ground. A couple of horses would come by and, with their noses, they would try to nudge me in the chest backwards, and, it took me a couple of minutes to figure out just to stand my ground. They backed off for a little while, and, eventually, Rob came back, and, then, the place started filling up with people. It started looking like just a normal keg party in the outdoors, a lot of people in normal clothing, blue jeans, whatever. Lot of long-haired people, lot of short-haired people, with cowboy hats. Then, the official wedding party arrived. All the women were dressed in bikini tops with grass skirts. All the men wore Hawaiian shirts with cutoffs and tennis shoes. It was all fairly humorous. The real thing that was interesting was the party afterwards. After the ceremony, a LOT of people, like a couple of hundred, started slowly pouring in. The horses took off to parts unknown. We went to Willie's private house at the property, away from the ghost town. He had a Texas-shaped swimming pool, it was pretty fucking big, with several kegs in different corners of the pool, and that's when I started just personally noticing all the people that were definitely his relatives, and, that, for me, was the funniest part, seeing all these tall, thin Willie Nelsons, short, fat, Willie Nelsons... The scariest, of course, was the FEMALE Willie Nelsons! They didn't have beards, but you could tell they were on his side of the family.



OTHER FUNNY CELEBRITY ENCOUNTERS: **Chuck Cass**, former "Kiddie-A-Go-Go" dancer and veteran of the early Chicago Punk scene (O'Banion's, La Mere Vipere, etc) shared this one recently: "I was at this record store downtown in the late 70s where Lou Reed was doing an in-store, signing peoples' albums and stuff, when this elderly Black woman comes in, walks around for a while, and says," I DON'T SEE NO LOU RAWLS!!!" Lou probably moved, like, one muscle in his face, and the signing went on. **Mark Ridlen**, late of the legendary Dallas Psych/Garage band, Lithium Xmas, and Quad Pi before that (the members of Quad Pi play "Rapid Fire," the "bad Guy" band in *Cotton Candy*, Ron Howard's naive, but indispensable, Made-For-TV R n' R movie. Watch for an interview on that subject next issue): "I was at The Ritz in New York once in the early 80s, and I saw Jack Nicholson, by himself getting pretty hammered. So, I went up to him, and asked him, "Hey, Jack! Have you heard from THE MONKEES lately?! You know, since you worked with them in *Head*?"(Nicholson wrote the "screenplay") He said, "Naaah, I haven't heard from those guys, man." Our own **James Porter** has one of the funniest (and one of the ONLY) stories about meeting somebody famous on the streets of Chicago (note: Unlike New York, you could walk for years in Downtown Chicago, or just about anywhere else, and never see a single celebrity): "I was walking up State Street, and I saw this old guy coming my way. Suddenly, I realize that it's Al Lewis! He was dressed real casual, didn't have an entourage or anything. I walked up to him and said, 'Hey, I know you're Al Lewis, but, what are you doing in Chicago?'" *(okay, those of you who don't know James have to bear in mind that he's Black, before we get to the punchline)* "He told me he was going around to some of the big ad agencies, trying to get some work. 'You know how it is,' he said, "We all have to work for MISTER CHARLEY!!!" I thought the shit was FUNNY, but I could see where a lot of Brothers would've taken it the wrong way. I later found out that Al Lewis had been a big supporter of Black causes, even The Panthers, for years. That's probably why he said that, you know, in solidarity."

I met a girl in High School who told me she once met Leif Garrett, backstage at Six Flags over Texas, where he was performing. She looked at him, and said, "So, do you put those pants on yourself, or do they PAINT them on?"

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Nardwuar
the Human Serviette
vs.
Tommy Chong

(This classic meeting between two of Canada's finest was done in the mid-90s. Please note when reading scandalous James Brown material – these are two man who between them aren't sure if Maceo played drums or not)

agree thqat Maceo

Nardwuar: Do you really love drugs?

Tommy Chong: I really do, I love it, I think drugs are what's happening and I advise everybody to do them, especially young kids, huh-huh. (giggles)

N: Are there any drugs you haven't done? That you won't do, that you sort of want to?

TC: Cigarettes, I won't do cigarettes, nicotine will kill ya. And I don't really drink alot of booze, alcohol will kill ya...but I smoke all the pot I can find. I don't smoke it all at once, I just do a little bit at a time, and I uh, I used to take acid but I quit around 1971.

How about ecstasy, are you in to that?

I done ecstasy and uh, it was great. Remember John Lurie from *Stranger than Paradise*, an actor? Yeah, him and I did ecstasy together we had a very nice time. We sort of chatted all night, while some strange man necked with his girlfriend in another room for about four hours, and she came out of the room and she's on ecstasy too, and she thought it was John, she'd was necking with a stranger and she thought it was her boyfriend.

So Tommy, how did you ever end up playing on a Joni Mitchell record?

Oh right, yeah, well her and Cheech had an affair one time, she liked Mexicans, so uh ,they were, they were, a number then I guess. She actually

liked tacos alot, so she asked us if we'd be on a record, and she was on one of

ours so we returned the favor.

Hey, who is Abe Stenanko, like he's a real guy isn't he?

Abe Stenanko is a cop from Vancouver, who busted every hippie in town, until I put him in the movies and got his ass transferred to Turkey.

Do you know where he is now, he's still in Turkey?

I don't know where Abe is now. I hope he's in Turkey, he's probably been, you know, the other end of that *Midnight Express*, you know, being raped by some prison guard, and liking it knowing Stenanko.

What was that band that you were, like, really was it four N's and a ... What was it, I don't get it, I don't get it, I don't get it.

Tommy Chong: I had a band once and we called it "Four nNggers and a Chink".

And then you changed it to "Four N's and a C" and then "Four Coloured Fellas and an Oriental Lad."

Every week we changed the sign.

You played cool places like Oil Can Harry's!"

Worked Oil Can Harry's, Danny Beseida, you know the owner, he's in uh, he's a dealer down in L.A.

Are you a Canadian, still?

(laughs) Well I don't know, I might have lost my citizenship, I don't think you can lose your citizenship though. I made it in L.A. and sometimes we get disbarred from places.

But you were born in Canada?

I was born in Edmonton, eh! University Hospital.

Right here!

Right here in Edmonton.

What year?

1938. May 24, 1938, In fact my mother said there were firecrackers going off,

they had a big celebration.

And you got on the rock and roll tip right off the bat?

I was about sixteen when I discovered that music could get you laid, so I got into music boy, didn't matter what you looked like either, you could be a geeky looking guy but if you played music, whoa, you'd get the girls.

That band "Four N's and a C,", and didn't you also join Bobby Taylor and the Vancouvers?

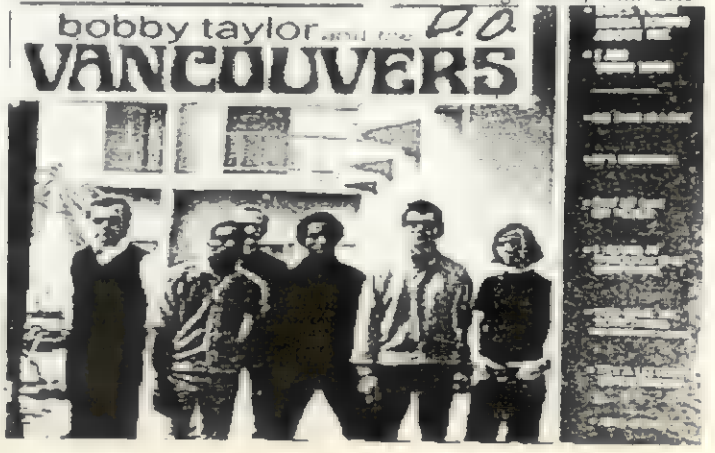
I was the original guy that started that group, Bobby Taylor was, I started off with a group called The Shades. We were based in Calgary.

Not the Shades of Blonde was it, featuring Mel Shaw, 49th parallel, sixties garage punk, Danny Low ,Q sound, Madonna?

No, but they probably got the name from us if you say Mel Shaw. Is that Mel Shaw junior or the guy that discovered the Stampeders?

The guy that discovered the Stampeders.

OK, well because see he was a groupie hanging around when we were, our first band was called the Shades cause there was a Canadian Indian, a black a guy named Tommy Melton, the Indian named Dick Bird, and myself who's half Chinese, we called ourselves "The Shades" cause we're all different colours. We used to do a stage show, with Eric



Murray on drums, Pete Watts on sax and my brother on bass and then we called ourselves The Shades. And we'd play Calgary and Edmonton from 1955-56 to 58 when we were asked to leave by the mayor. Then we became Little Daddie and the Bachelors.

Little Daddie and the Bachelors! Did The Shades ever record anything?

The Shades never recorded anything, Little Daddy and the Bachelors recorded a couple of records, yeah. We won a contest at the teen fair in Vancouver and the first prize was a recording contract and we recorded at a radio station on the stairway, and we did a record and it got put out.

How about Night Train Review, maybe that's another band - they're on that "History of Vancouver Rock and Roll Volume 2," that you probably don't see any money from, or you probably don't need the money right?

Well no, I always need the money but I don't see it. My band , Little Daddie and the Bachelors, are on that record. Doing , uh, "Junior's Jerk."

"Junior's Jerk" has that great reverb on it doesn't it, like it's instrumental.

That was mine, I did that, and um---

What happened to Bobby Taylor and the Vancouvers, like you started that group, you guys were the first Canadian group, the first non-black group to be signed to Motown, that's pretty wild!

Yeah, we had a number one record, yeah we, there's a lot of history there. We uh, we discovered the Jackson Five, opening for us one place.

That was Bobby Taylor who discovered Michael Jackson, you helped too?

No we were there, we were all there at the same time. We were playing a chitlin' gig, Chitlin; circuit, all the black clubs and uh, we played the Regal Theatre in Chicago and, um, the Jackson Five were opening for us and so we took 'em to Detroit and had 'em signed on to Motown.

Was it hard to get signed to Motown being a Vancouver band?

Well, I had an after hours club in Vancouver and when any of the Motown acts would call...

Called?

It was called the Elegant Parlour, whenever the Motown acts would stay in Vancouver they would come down to my club, cause it was like a black after hours booze bar, and it was hip. And we played, that's when the Vancouvers, we played there and so the Supremes actually discovered us first. They were partying and they told Barry Gordy, and Barry flew in to Vancouver, seen us, signed us, and we went to Detroit.

Going to Detroit, what year was that?

It was in '67.

Have you ever smoked anything with Neil Young before Tommy, Tommy, Tommy-

I never-

Tommy Ch-

I never-

Tommy Ch-

I never met Neil Young. I just seen him in a movie where he had a big coke booger in his nose..that's the only time I've-

And they airbrushed it out?!

No they left it in.

No, *The Last Waltz* they airbrushed it out.

Not in the version I saw! Big huge coke booger!

Neil Young once recorded a record for Motown with Rick James that was never released.

I met Rick James later, and I met George Clinton later, the only Motown people I knew were The Temptations, Smoky, Stevie, uh--

How about any of the KING artists , Brown, did you ever party with James Brown?

Well James, it's weird, uh, James, their band used to come to the Elegant Parlour and sit in with us.

His band the JB's?

The drummer, some famous guy.

Fred Wesley? Maceo Parker?

Maceo! No. Maceo played sax, didn't he, well they used to sit in. One night this other promoter had a club upstairs trying to go psychedelic, this is at the height of the Motown era, and he booked all these groups that later went on to become mega superstars, like Janis Joplin and the Rolling Stones, and he had this club upstairs and he couldn't make any money with it. It's called the Red Nose Circus and my club Elegant Parlour was right below that in the basement, and our club would be packed and his club would be empty, with the Rolling Stones, they never drew anybody, it was amazing. One night all the James Brown band was playing on stage and I look in the back and I could see Mick Jagger and Keith Richards trying to get in the club and they couldn't get in cause it was to crowded.

James Brown, what do you think his drug of preference was, cause he was known to do angel dust.

Well James went through a bi-sexual period that was real funny, remember that song "Please, Please, Please", well James had a gay lover at the time and he'd be on his knees. If you look at some film you'll see him on his knees and this guy would run up and throw a fur coat over him, and pick him up and carry him off the stage, remember that? And then James would break loose and come running back, "Please, Please" , he'd sing some more, the guy that would run out and grab him that was James' lover. James was a very heavy bi-sexual for the longest time and then he, James, I don't know what happened to him.

He was trying to open a bunch of burger restaurants in the ghettos, did you hear about that, what was that about?

Ah, James, man, you know, he's a, he's from the south, and he was like a down home brother, you know, not to many smarts, like the rest of 'em, you know, like the rest of us, anybody in rock and roll, we just new one thing, you know, music, and James was one of 'em. He's a cool guy though, I met him.

Have you seen him since, or do any of the old rock and rollers phone you up at all coming through town?

They got short memories, a lot of them, they don't remember, well, they're old fuckers too you know, like Joe Jackson, Michael Jackson's father doesn't remember me, I met him one time--

Maybe he doesn't want to remember you, selective memory?

He's fuckin stupid man, he doesn't remember me, he does not. I look him in the eye and he doesn't remember me, it's weird man. I think he - I don't know, whatever, you know Jermaine and all the rest, they do, cause they [illegible] like half way - they had half a brain you know.

When did, like, the Vancouvers break-up, was that your last band before movies started?

Yeah, I got fired, I got fired, I had a, I was getting my green card, I had Motown pay for it, myself and the bass player, because you know how important a green card is. You know, working down in the States, so I had a gig, I was backing up, Bobby had left, he went on with Smokey, and the Vancouvers were backing up a girl called Chris Clark, who was Barry Gordy's white girl of the month club, you know. So I had to leave town in the middle of the gig to go do an interview to get my green card, and uh, she fired me for leaving the gig, this is after I told her what I had to do. So I quit the band moved to Vancouver, and started an improv group. Then I met Cheech.

Had Cheech been in bands before?

Yeah, he was Little Caesar and the Chicanos, or something, he had a Chicano band like a Jerry Vale kind of band, and he also was in Calgary, Brad Creek outside of Calgary, and uh, he was in a lot of bands.

Do you have any Brian Wilson stories?

(laughs) Cheech and I we were playing Vegas one time, we walked in the elevator and Brian was huddled in the corner. And I don't know how long he'd been riding the elevator for, but he just, kind of comatose in the corner, we never said anything we just kinda looked over and I said "Oh Brian".

Didn't you want to help him?

Naw, what can you do, he's fucked up...met Ted Nugent one time, that was funny, just recently. I said in the elevator "Hey Ted, how are ya doin', I'm Tommy Chong" and Ted says "No, I'm Ted Nugent". And I said "No, Ted, I'm Tommy Chong" , and he goes "Oh, I'm sorry man, I'm deaf." He's deaf, he can't hardly hear!

What about Elvis?

Elvis sent [illegible] a Christmas card one time, and that's the closest I ever got to Elvis.

Who would send you Christmas cards, and why, just, who, celebrity to celebrity or any particular reason?

I think Elvis probably got into our movies and that was his way of saying, you know, hello, and that's about all I can think of.

What about Margaret Trudeau?

No, nothing [illegible] Margaret, no, I was doing movies when she was fucking Mick.

Did you get to go to the White House and meet Nixon? Any White House---

The closest I got to the White House, I was in the Swedish embassy with Peter Sellers. Peter was going out with the daughter of the ambassador, I had a gig in Washington and Peter called me up and he said, he sent me a telegram saying that the Swedish Ambassador requests the presence of Sir Ashely Roachclip at the residence. And Ashely Roachclip was a character from one of our records. I went there and we had a great time, we played records, we got stoned, they kept ringing these bells that the maids would come in, you know, there's a bell there and it would say service, [illegible] we'd push it and a sleepy maid would show up about ten minutes later. We'd look around, "oh," "yeah get us a beer", so she'd get us a beer, we had [illegible] good time. It was legal cause we were on Swedish territory so we could smoke dope.

So Tommy Chong, how were the Beatles, it's been rumored that Paul and John had [illegible] wild escapades in different rooms, did you ever hear anything about that?

I met John and Rod Stewart in a bedroom the same night at a party in Lou Adler's house, and they were in there. I was going to find a place to smoke a joint, they were in there, John was sitting on the floor, he was into his Mai Ling era, you know, the Chinese secretary and Rod was sitting on the bed. I think he was going or he had just met Brit Eckland at the time, and I come in and I "hey how are ya doin you guys" light up a joint and they freaked! They were afraid of the immigration! And John wouldn't take a toke and Rod wouldn't take a toke, so I said 'fuck it' and I smoked it myself! That's the only time I've met those guys.

So you are here right now in Edmonton, like do you go home right now to your house in Edmonton, do you have anywhere to stay?

I don't think so man, Edmonton?

No relatives anywhere? You said you were from Edmonton, or you went to school here Naw, no more relatives anymore, they tore Chinatown down man, whatever relatives I had, they were living there, they're gone. In Calgary, I got some nieces.

All right Tommy Chong....doot doola doot doo

uh, doot doo.

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Skizz

The World's Most Original One-Man Band

By Mike Faloon

Musician. Filmmaker. Writer. Recording engineer. Skizz is a man of many talents. He programs MicroCineFest, an annual underground film festival based in Baltimore, and works for the Maryland Film Festival. He's played drums for most of the area's best bands, including Berserk and Garage Sale, and has fronted a number of other bands over the years. In addition to these pursuits, he also performs as a one-man band. But he's not from the school of "a guy and his guitar." Skizz is out to build a constantly evolving one-man band that's unlike anything you've ever seen before, and he'll make his own equipment if that's what it takes. For example, he made his own headset microphone using a pair of safety goggles, a clothes hanger, and parts from an old telephone. He uses 8-track players and old video games as instruments. And he's got a knack for writing good songs, too.

Roctober: How would you describe your act?

I've been doing a one-man band thing for awhile now, though somewhat infrequently. What I do is play and sing along to ■ videotape. In the past, part of the act has included playing 4-chord songs by looping each chord and recording them onto different tracks of old 8-track tapes, which I then play on that old 2XL robot toy. I can pick which chord to play by choosing which track of the 8-track to play. My video rhythm tracks are usually looped clips of old videogames like Pong, or rhythmic clips from old TV shows. For example, one of my favorites is ■ beat I made out of ■ looped shot of a guy hammering a sign into the ground - I took it from the final episode of *The Fugitive*. I'd like to do some of my harder rocking songs by making videos of me performing on real instruments, as my own back-up band, similar to what the Flaming Lips did a couple tours ago so that their drummer could play guitar and keyboards live, but I haven't had time to put that together yet. My latest addition that I'm now in the process of working into the act is the Ukestick, essentially an electric Ukulele. It's so much easier to play than guitar, and sounds friendlier too. The act is ■ little hard to explain; it's something you need to see. But like I said, I do it rather infrequently. I'm lucky if I do ■ live one-man-band performance once ■ year. I'm hoping that'll change soon now that I'm really into the Ukestick and anxious to do more with it. I really wanna take it on tour. I'm motivated - I can't always motivate an entire band to go on tour. As for one-man recordings, I've been doing that since 1985.

That's longer than I realized. If the recordings date back to 1985, when did you first play out as a one-person act?

I think it was 1984 that I did a solo acoustic act as a joke. I was playing in ■ hardcore punk band, Burried Droog, that was offered ■ show, but the other members couldn't make it so I played by myself, playing our songs on acoustic guitar. It was awful. In '85 my brother bought ■ really nice rack-mountable Tascam 4-track cassette, which he quickly sold to me since I was always using it. That's what I recorded on for years. My "studio" (Beef Studio) is now upgraded a bit. I still have the Tascam 4-track, for recording simple demos and experiments, but I also have a Fostex 1/4" 8-track reel-to-reel for recording more complex demos, and a Teac 1/2" 8-track reel-to-reel for recording anything that might get released. I have only recently begun playing around with digital recording software. In my studio I've collected tons of cool sound-making devices over the years. I haven't worked the homemade Theremin into the live act yet, but I will.

How have audiences responded to your act, especially the old technology aspects such as "playing" an 8-track player and using Pong?

It gets ■ laugh from the people who recognize those elements. I guess I shouldn't be too surprised that most people in clubs who might see my act are often too young to recognize Pong, or 8-tracks, and especially 2XL, but I think otherwise they're at least enjoying the songs and unique visual aspects. Even people my age have come up to me afterwards wanting to know what the 2XL is. They think it's actually some sort of fancy computerized instrument and are usually ■ little disappointed to find out it's really just a plastic toy 8-track player shaped like ■ robot. I just assumed everyone had been an afterschool TV junky like me and saw those 2XL commercials a million times. I never knew anyone who had a 2XL. I found mine in ■ thrift shop ten years ago, and a friend gave me another one ■■ a back-up. I've had to install output jacks on them so that I can run them through pedals and into amps. That's how I learned that any toy instrument with a speaker can be fitted with an output jack, and then be worked into my act.

The first time I saw Gayboot perform was at an R.I.T apartment hardcore show in the summer of 2003. My friend Brian aka: Colonel Parmisan wore a motorcycle helmet and delivered a batch of electronic-noise-abusement through a computer. During the set he worked on an old typewriter, crumpled up the messages and threw them out into a room of bewildered onlookers. Each recipient would get whatever was on the note. Mine was a cheap old camera. Brian was unloading a few of his meager possessions before a temporary move out west...

The next time I experienced Gayboot was for a show Brian asked me to book at AIV (avspace.org) in early 2005. By then, it included Matty Sonar (of Rochester's Rockstars and his solo project Slurblown) and Chris Wicks (former Eastman School of Music student who plays alto saxaphone in many jazz groups) the show included a grueling wrestling match between Brian and Matty (wearing authentic singlets). The April Fool's 2005 show was held at Bullwinkle's Cafe (a noirish 20's-40's themed bar on a seedy street in Rochester. Highlights included a dramatic evangellistical presentation and distribution of cake in a lamb shaped tin.* 'Twas the night before the Pope passed away.

* Funniest thing I saw all year.

Ironic projected films furnished by Cameron Farash.

Chris gettin' his sax on.

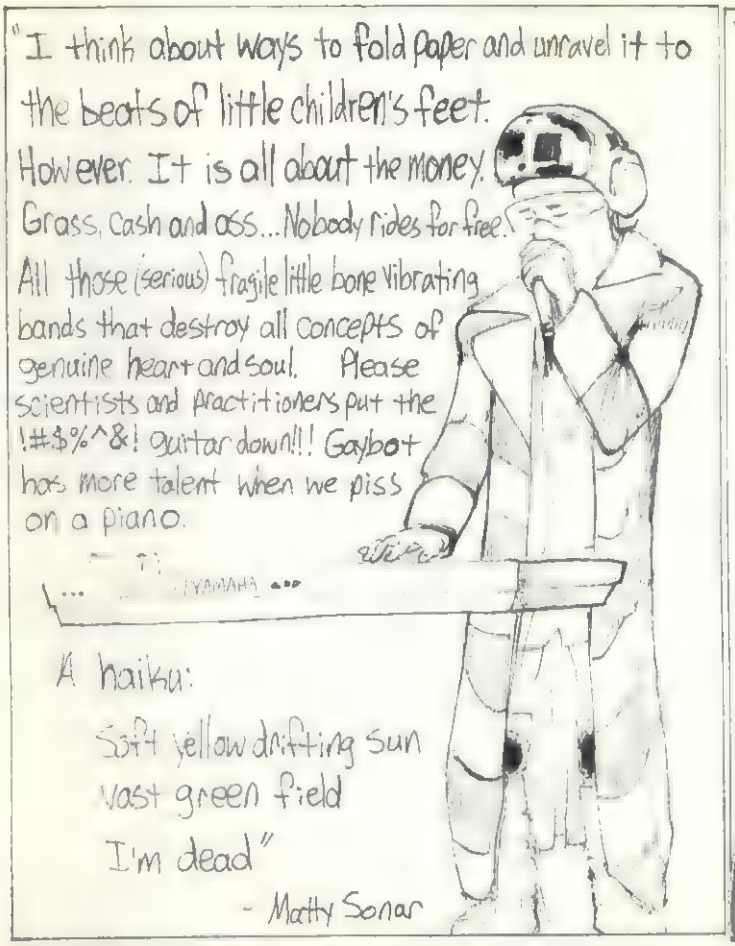
dislocation thaught travesty dons an era of a new gown... spilt builk joinington when them exponder thou by virtue of their hinderance in thee. no plankton shall escape unhertle-browed... and oblithering sanctuary.

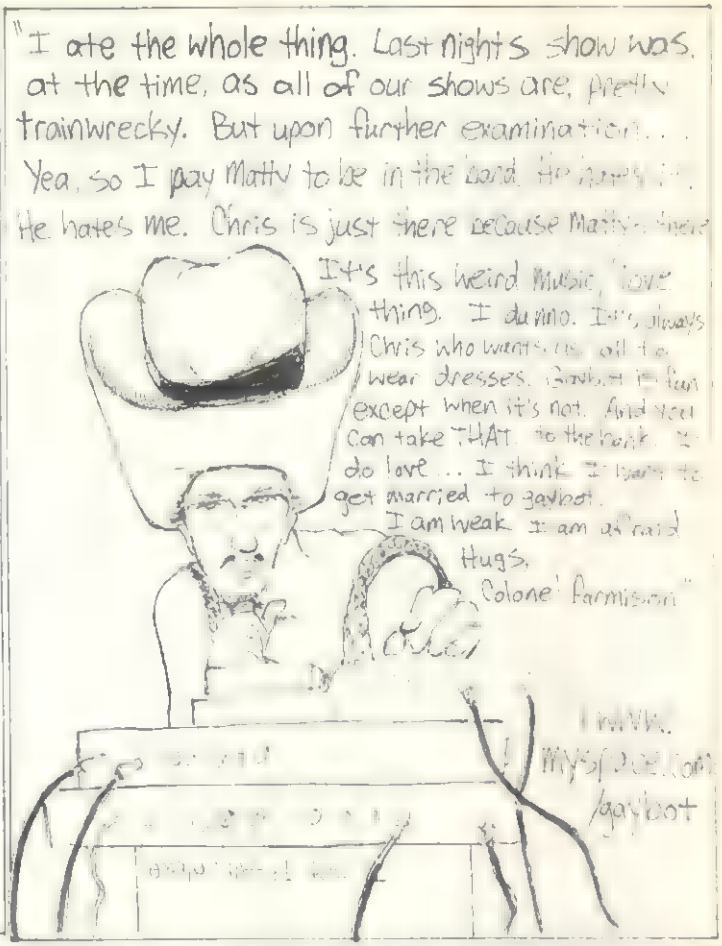
-Mike Twohig's spiel on Gayboot

Chris enjoying an ice cold P.B.R.

Chris has been part of jazz experiments: tatYana, Dialects, Luciferin, Mercenery and Tadpole Trio.

Wicks. thegraything .com





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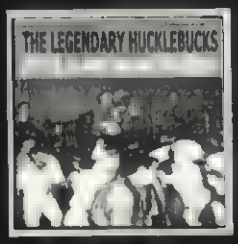

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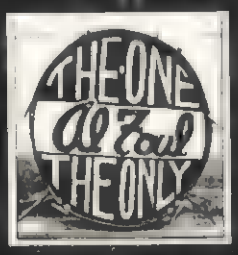

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THIS IS REBEL MUSIC:

The HARVEY KUBERNIK InnerView with Gary Pig Gold

Photo by BraD Elterman.

He's that most rare and precious of musical creatures: A man who recognized and surrendered himself totally to his passion at an early age, yet grew not only to be consumed by what he saw and heard, but to then successfully nurture that fervor into both a lifestyle *and* a career.

It is important and, yes, bittersweet to realize, of course, that within a previous socio-melodic environ Harvey Kubernik would most comfortably find himself right there alongside the Sam Phillips, Leonard Chess and Ahmet Erteguns of the world, assembling record labels, recording studios and talent rosters to challenge every status quo within eye and earshot. Yet today, unlike others of Harvey's age and ilk resigned to filling their hours and times eBaying at the collectors' moon as it were, this still delightfully precocious mover and shaker has instead committed some of his most essential musical moments and encounters into *This Is Rebel Music: The Harvey Kubernik InnerViews*, a landmark new book now available from the University of New Mexico Press.

For this, his first book, Kubernik has produced an impressive cast. Ray Manzarek, Berry Gordy Jr., Grace Slick, Allen Ginsberg, Andrew Loog Oldham, Steven Van Zandt, Jim Keltner, Jack Nitzsche, Chrissie Hynde, Ravi Shankar, Marianne Faithfull, Keith Richards and, in an epilogue, reggae scholar Roger Steffens. The man's interview methods -- the study of which alone makes this a very worthwhile read for any music journalist -- are, for lack of a better word, oblique. Non-linear, certainly: a typical Kubernik interview does not begin with, say, "So, you were born in Newark, right?" So what might otherwise seem odd notions, like talking basketball with Ray Manzarek, jazz with Ravi Shankar, or mic placement with Keith Richards, turn out to both reveal surprising things about the subjects themselves and contribute to the overall tapestry.

Good stories, ultimately, are what make a good book, and *This Is Rebel Music* has plenty of them.

Active as a music journalist, writer and interviewer since 1972, Harvey's work has already been published nationally and internationally in *Melody Maker*, *The Los Angeles Free Press*, *Crawdaddy!*, *Musician*, *Goldmine*, *MIX*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *MOJO*, *Music Life* and *HITS*, among other periodicals. Kubernik writings have also appeared in several book anthologies, including *The Rolling Stone Book Of The Beats* and *Drinking With Bukowski*. He is the project coordinator of the recorded set *The Jack Kerouac Collection*. Kubernik also penned the liner notes on the expanded re-release of The Ramones' *End Of The Century* CD that was issued in 2002. More recently, he served as creative consultant and contributing writer with Domenic Priore on the music-in-film documentary *Hollywood Rocks The Movies: The 1970's* that aired on the American Movie Classics cable network in 2004.

Harvey was formerly a studio session percussionist with Phil Spector on several recordings, including *End Of The Century*, and subsequently produced over fifty spoken word and oral history music albums during the last twenty years. His studio credits include producing and editing audio biographies on Paul Kantner and Ray Manzarek, jazz activist and educator Buddy Collette, and Basketball Hall Of Fame members John R. Wooden and Bill Walton, among others. He's also a former West Coast Director of A&R for MCA Records.

The man's enthusiasm and true wonder at all he has seen, heard and done absolutely pours from the finely tuned words and observations collected not only within *Rebel Music*, but throughout our exchange below as well. And through it all remains a zeal I cannot be alone in recognizing as comparable only to the pure, simple joy that can still come from unearthing a rare Stax promo 45 at a sidewalk sale, or catching a mint print of *Carnival Rock* on cable at four in the morning.

GPG: In the prologue to "This Is Rebel Music," you draw an important musical AND social thread from Phil Spector's "He's A Rebel" clear on through to Bob Marley's "Roots, Rock, Reggae" and "Rebel Music (3 O'Clock Road Block)."

HK: I think it was Bob Marley who said something like "Don't follow the pack, let the pack follow you."

Yet many claim what I only semi-facetiously call the Clear Channeling of today's media has effectively knotted that thread, excluding the more off-center creators from ever reaching the worldwide audiences they so deserve. Have you any idea where exactly ARE the true Rebels of twenty-first century music – the Spectors and Marleys for starters -- and how badly has rebellion's relegation to beneath-the-radar status harmed both the quality and evolution of rock and roll, not to mention popular culture overall?

I actually believe the true rebels are people doing their art or music *after* the age of forty! Remember, the entertainment media wants you to retire by thirty. And sure, it would be wonderful if today's Rebels had more visibility and clout, but few of them have access to the star-making apparatus. Because I've been around for over thirty years professionally, made records and worked in the business, I extract results without any tabloid reporting or conning juicy information. My book really isn't about gossip, networking, sex or drugs. I go instead into areas few books have ventured, because my central theme is the artistic process, content, and occasionally and particularly my own subject-specific Los Angeles and Hollywood interactions I've enjoyed with the contributors for decades. And because I am a bi-product of *real* Hollywood, the results connect to your soul. Bio-regional aspects of my life lace the chapters for my readers. Yes, some of us have been relegated to beneath-the-radar seating location on the great rock 'n' roll ride. I never had the luxury of a career. I navigate on instinct and vibe. But maybe because people such as myself, and other better-known cult musical artists and true rebels like my good pal sixty-year-old Chris Darrow have had very long gestation periods to develop, both of us may still yet penetrate pop culture in *new* media formats. Personally -- and Chris will tell you this as well -- the evolution of rock 'n' roll has been slightly harmed because both of us still haven't ever gotten our real full swings on the baseball diamond of opportunities. We know we'd help nurture and bring forward so many other talented musical people as well, which always makes our hero journey on some Joseph Campbell level more difficult at times. I spin Curtis Mayfield and still get fortification. I play "The Seeker" by The Who for some answers. For instance, do we ever read about how Chrissie Hynde writes her songs? The blow-by-blow on how Grace Slick, Andrew Loog Oldham, Berry Gordy Jr. and Marianne Faithfull wrote *their* books? I was brave and determined to chronicle a lot of artists – I think every one of them is over age fifty or sixty -- in *Rebel Music*. I've made records with musicians over seventy, and athletes and educators over eighty. I'm not afraid of age and wisdom. I pass it on to others. Check out the credits in *This Is Rebel Music*.

Yes indeed! Nine full pages which read like a litany of heroes and just plain hard workers from the past half-century of music and music-making.

One thing I learned from Ram Dass is "Honor the incarnation." And the albums I've produced have always contained scores of Thank You credits and acknowledgements. There was a nice review of my book in *High Times*, and the writer suggested reading the credits first before devouring the rest of *Rebel Music*. You don't see that observation very often, do you? See, I'd like to know what happened to the DIY nation. America was built on those principals! Or at least on the independent chance-taker. Rock 'n' roll, blues and jazz especially started on record labels like Sun, Chess, and Dot, without overt networking and kowtowing. Sure, bands play for radio stations and at their fund-raisers for charity to get airplay favors. But now it is a madhouse full of political machinations, and I'm sure it's a battle getting those bookings at radio station-sponsored shows these days. Even National Public Radio and other subscription-driven perceived hip and cool outlets produce live music events where there are elements of basically pay-to-play priority seating involved in the scenario. Also, what I hear on Howard Stern's radio show about the way he is being treated by Clear Channel, and their dysfunctional ownership seemingly governing his freedom of speech -- or should I say specifically some of the ongoing business concerns over his show -- is a bummer. But there's a radio station in L.A. that Clear Channel is involved

with and sell the advertising time for, Indie 103.1 FM, that's pretty good. Steve Jones and Henry Rollins have weekly slots. There's also a reggae and heavy metal program.

College stations such as WFMU still feature quite a rebel creativity in their programming and playlists, and Air America Radio is surely bringing a sense of adventure back to the airwaves, turning over entire blocks of airtime for Steve Earle, for example.

That's healthy. Good for WFMU! The evolution of rock 'n' roll on the radio dial might truly be in the hands of Little Steven now. To have heard Little Steven's plans for his "Underground Garage" show, and see him actually execute it later on 135 radio stations with a million listeners a week, is thrilling. The re-investment of his E Street Band arena-rock monies and his own *Sopranos* paychecks right into the uncharted radio business, and his energy pushing grassroots music and archive-driven record and radio syndication, is truly inspiring. I am so proud of what Steven is doing, and happy to call him my friend. What a groovy role model, and a new-version rock 'n' roll star! His recent International Underground Garage Festival had a unique booking policy, and democratic production logistics as well. I steered Kim Fowley over to Little Steven for some projects and he asked Kim to be one of the principal MC's for that event. And Steven earlier this summer had Kim MC his Battle Of The Bands event in New York that MTV2 broadcast. Steven also has an existing relationship with Sirius Satellite Radio, one of the subscription radio services. He has hired Kim and other characters as on-air personalities that select records from Steven's hand-picked 1,500 song list. Trust this dude. You see, rock 'n' roll is a religion to Little Steven, and to a lot of us. Steven is like Gandhi with a Fender guitar walking stick.

How much faith do you also place upon the Internet to level our global playing field, in benefit of these more "subversive" creative forces?

I have great belief in the Internet. I like the info flow. I like seeing playlists and DJ slots that go deep catalogue. Real music people doing their thing. Clear Channel doesn't have to worry about the small guy. Those driven and loveable businessmen and program consultants can all relax, keep cutting deals, and produce radio and other products that they're closely involved with, whether it's tied in with a live venue they control, or in the promotion of ■ artist's record on a chain of stations they have exclusive agreements with. It's a free country... Still, I notice Clear Channel keeps expanding their concert division. And their trip, "owning" radio exposure, is adding a timid climate to music and exposure for others, and I don't know if that's a good thing for our ears. Why don't they just put all the Clear Channel executives and administrators *in* the bands, and that way they can pay themselves after they perform on-stage in places they own? Besides, most of the deals and networking, and influential radio / video playlist adds and awareness these days from all station owners and competing networks are linked to or reflect nepotism, intimidation, favors, fear, social and political skills, sex, as ladder climbing and positioning, and not a result of a level field exclusively based on talent anyway. That's one of the reasons we keep returning a lot to the past for our musical sounds and reissue product: A good deal of the current alternatives offered are lame, non-original and not organic. The passionate talent managers will find ways to spread the goods and infuse the product flow chart. That's what is cool about the Internet. If you follow a trail, if you explore the options and the links, you will find some noteworthy news and sounds that will enhance your life. It might be cultish and in the fringe, but that's always been where the fun is.

But how feasible – economically, and otherwise – is it to expect "cult figures" to wield sufficient clout towards making real and lasting changes?

"Cult figures" may never have the perceived power of arena rock or stadium headlining acts, but some cult figures can co-exist. The audience *can* support talent and grassroots music, but it's a small, already converted consumer group. But some traction and new popularity is occurring for change. The Dave Matthews Band, Phish, even the Grateful Dead previously -- now the Dead -- are models that have clout and influence in consumer-deliver methods, and those acts have always let you tape their live musical performances. That might say something about the relationship and bond these groups have with fans. I followed The Kinks from 1966 through 1969 when they couldn't tour in America. It was harder to collect them, let alone see them. The audience has to extend more than ever to demonstrate their hunger for sounds and records as a means of passionate artist and "cult figure" bonding with the audience. And don't even waste your time hollering "corporate rock sucks." Punk and new wave, for all the acclaim, didn't really change the rulebook. Some great music was made, but the current version of the music and record machine is bigger and more powerful than ever now. Don't blame Clear Channel for everything. They're not greed heads or *cochinos* (pigs). It's business. So the Internet becomes one of the tunnels used in *The Great Escape* movie. And I've always subscribed to the "If you can beat them, don't even think about joining them." It's not about competition. It's about collaboration. That might be a general path to follow in housing or moving creative forces towards at least getting examined. My book reinforces some of this root foundation floor plan, but I didn't want to live in cyberspace when I was putting it together. I don't have to look the Sixties up and use the web as a research tool to access and find out about that decade, because I *lived* in it, and I lived it where rock 'n' roll was my tour guide and the audio its trademark. That's why my book is so potent. I trusted the music and many of the artists, and some show up with me and dance in the pages.

Where specifically, and how, did you grow up to learn about and love the Rebel Music in the first place?

I'm a native Angeleno. Born in downtown Los Angeles, raised as a child in South Central Los Angeles in Watts ...before any NWA members were even born. I attended Coliseum Street Elementary School and then went to Muirfield Elementary in Crenshaw Village, and before I was a teenager we relocated close by to Culver City for the late Fifties. In the early Sixties my family eventually landed in the Fairfax / Wilshire Miracle Mile district to complete that decade. I went to junior high on Wilshire between Highland and Crenshaw then I actually returned to Culver City after Fairfax High School obligations before graduating West L.A. Junior College. I also briefly attended Los Angeles City College on Vermont Avenue very close to Hollywood. So the first twenty-two years of my life before I bunked solo a block from Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood were a swing back and forth between deep Los Angeles, the beach region of Venice and Santa Monica, and Fairfax / Beverly Hills and Hollywood. But it's *all* the 213 area code in my book. The Los Angeles area especially had some very important radio stations from the 1950's through the Seventies, but you never really read about them. They are cited in my book. And, at the time, those essential channels weren't all cramped on the left side of the FM dial. So those AM, and later few FM stations from decades ago still reside and resonate in everything I do. So many historic positive trends and cultural events, like classic R&B and cool rock and rockabilly records broke out of the Los Angeles market initially that eventually informed the rest of the universe. And many recording artists and producers came from Los Angeles, whether it be Charles Mingus, Buddy Collette, Lou Adler, Herb Alpert, Jan Berry, Berry White, Bob Hite, some of the Coasters, Timi Yuro, Ricky Nelson, Jerry Goldsmith, Brenton Wood, The Electric Prunes. I grew up exposed to music because AM radio was very much part of the environment in the 1950's and Sixties, and later FM radio until the late Seventies. Even the record shops of the late Fifties well through the Sixties didn't segregate or hide the small label records from the popular best sellers on the shelves. ■ was all available, and on the airwaves everywhere. The Forties and Fifties had intense R&B and jazz all over Los Angeles and Hollywood, which poured into the rock and pop being brewed in the Sixties. Capitol Records was like the Library of Congress. And because my parents were, and still are fans of music, mostly big band and vocalists, I would hear Frankie Laine, Herb Jeffries, Julie London, Frank Sinatra, Peggy Lee, Nat King Cole, Sammy Davis Jr., and Jackie Gleason albums while I was being exposed in the late Fifties / early Sixties AM radio and the R&B / race music. Jazz, big band stuff, then surf music exploded and I was right in the middle of it. A couple of years before the Beach Boys and Dick Dale, Jan and Dean were ■ the airwaves, who with The Coasters, Elvis Presley, Jackie Wilson, Chuck Berry and others set the table for my education. In 1964 the English Invasion happened, and that *really* made the city rock, and the airwaves a delight to investigate. The film and TV business was located in Southern California and were tied in together with existing record labels and radio holdings that shoved it collectively at the rest of the world. Los Angeles and the West Coast Sound then wasn't laid-back and plastic. It was a territory receptive to this new English music. Themes from TV shows also made a big impression. *Route 66*, *The Twilight Zone*, and later *The Fugitive*. Personally, the filmusic merger made a greater impact on me because these shows were produced locally. You could *see* Rod Serling driving on Sunset back to his home in Pacific Palisades. You could *meet* George Maharis on Beverly Boulevard, and David Janssen went to Fairfax High School and I heard him in our campus auditorium. It all seemed very accessible, yet it was still our secret society. Especially rock 'n' roll. You could go to music shows and buy tickets at the door: A policy that existed until the mid or late Seventies, even for arena concerts. Parking wasn't a big hassle then, logistically or economically. There weren't huge guest lists; the accommodation of both the music and film industry "money" to the bookings, let alone laminates, defining backstage geography and band access. Security many years ago wasn't an issue regarding the performers. Those concerns really only emerged after the unfortunate death of John Lennon in 1980.

Did you ever grow excited and inspired enough to pick up an instrument and get in a band yourself?

No, I didn't really want to play guitar or be in a band. I saw too many egos, jerks and politics even as a child to seriously attempt it. I was always talked out of things by some students and "so called" friends as a teenager. I did play drums for a few years, and was in ■ band very briefly, The Riptides, in 1964. They were a surf and instrumental group, but rumor had it that I was tossed out for being Jewish. Probably a blessing in disguise. Made me hang out with surfers, Negroes and Mexicans, who invited me into *their* culture. Hence my extensive first-hand knowledge and appreciation of soul, surf and Chicano music. Later I was brought to more record collectors and long-hair rock music pals. Phil Spector's records were a unifying rope that tied us all together. My regular habit of reading *Jet*, *Sepia* and *Ebony*, along with the KGFJ *Soul* station paper directed me to cool R&B and the initial Motown records. There was also all the action in the KRLA *Beat* magazine. KFWB also had a weekly station paper. Plus I still had my surf music, Spector pop, *Shindig!* filmed locally, and I started to learn about who played on these records, or who was the musical supervisor or arranger or producer. See, I wanted to know who *wrote* the things. And I didn't concentrate on the business aspect of the product, either. After school I didn't intern at a record label; I didn't hustle or push my way onto some music or film lot, or get connected through family friends or religion. My parents didn't pull strings. No woman later ever got me a job or brought me into an office for big employment opportunities. Consequently, that's why my books are so refreshing, choice, honest,

and packed with information and illustrations and graphics you haven't seen, or read, know or researched on the Internet, anywhere. I *lived* it, and now I write about it. Later, I was always content to hang, bang and clap on a bunch of Spector's records between 1975 and '80, like the Ramones, Leonard Cohen, The Paley Brothers, Dion, as well as some Kim Fowley sessions, Dennis Dragon and Drew Steele / Surf Punks dates, and various things, vocals and percussion with the late, great Ethan James and his Radio Tokyo studio scene in the Eighties. I'll be back in the recording studio, maybe doing a solo album.

Somewhere right now, I hear The Crystals & "He's A Rebel" being played in your honor!

My books are now my wall of sound. Although not the bombastic driven sonic gems Phil Spector gave us. I *always* sought out the underdogs and the rebels. I followed Phil at Fairfax High, then even wrote high school term papers on Ravi Shankar and the Beat generation writers like Allen Ginsberg, both of whom I interviewed in my book and that Phil, ironically or logically, produced afterwards at one point. Lenny Kaye sent me an email to say the Ginsberg interview in *Rebel Music* is priceless. Another factor why my book has heat is that it's written and researched by a native of Los Angeles. A true California man. Most books written about the Los Angeles music scene, or the history of L.A., or the majority of music reporting done on the city have been from out-of-towners who moved here, university academics, U.K. reporters, the caustic New York writer, and carpetbaggers who came here to work, steal and/or bring their baggage with them when discovering and later describing this city. And, there is inherent East Coast bias towards anything birthed out West. I'm a guy from the neighborhood that has finally gotten a chance to publish a book. It's about my city because I *am* the city. I carry the legacy of Los Angeles on my shoulders, especially the musical heritage, and have done a pretty good job as far as documentation and giving many opportunities to others. I've done my third of a century ditch digging, and now I've reached the surface by getting my work out in hardcover book form while providing some real heat to the energy and real-deal Los Angeles. I've delivered one third of the trilogy I'm working with *Rebel Music*, and just completed the second book, *Hollywood Shack Job: Rock Music In Film And On Your Screen*.

Describe then your earliest & most profound musical experiences and encounters.

It seems every musical exposure did something to my DNA. I still see bands, sometimes due to my association with Little Steven's Underground Garage, or old favorites, new artists every few weeks, and friends in groups, but off the top of my head? There are just too many, but when I compiled *Rebel Music* these gigs and seminal face-to-face musical exposures fed me: A 1958 Spike Jones performance at the Los Angeles County Fair. Mickey Katz with my family somewhere like the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium in the early 1960's. Beach Boys 1962 in Culver City, next to Currie's Ice Cream store. Herb Alpert 1966 at the Fairfax High auditorium in a benefit concert for Mexican earthquake relief. He was magnificent, the band was tight, the horns sounded like they escaped from the Olvera Street sidewalk -- and the gesture, a benefit performance, was years before George Harrison put together Bangla Desh. The Byrds played Fairfax the year before: David Crosby in a black cape. I also saw the Sunshine Company and Peanut Butter Conspiracy at the school. A Rascals concert twenty years ago that was really groovy in Anaheim: Dino and Felix did *not* let me down. John Mayall and the Blues Breakers 1968 at the Rose Palace in Pasadena. The original Deep Purple also played, and "Hush" was spectacular. Later, Mayall's new Turning Point Band in 1969 at the Whisky A Go Go. Savoy Brown at the same place. Albert King at the Ash Grove in 1968, Mose Allison and Muddy Waters in the Ash Grove around 1971. Muddy at the Troubadour in the late Sixties. An April 1967 Hollywood Bowl KHJ concert for the United Negro College Fund: full Motown Orchestra and road band headlined by the Supremes, Buffalo Springfield, Johnny Rivers. Years later it was revealed to me that Flo was on stage that night. I didn't notice the difference. Late December 1966 KBLA concert in Santa Monica with Love, Music Machine, Sonny and Cher, Buffalo Springfield, Captain Beefheart and his Magic Band. 1967 Seeds show at the Valley Music Center: yes, Sky Saxon could dance. The Who, Association, Everly Brothers and Sopwith Camel at the Hollywood Bowl, second row box sets for $3.00. If you bought an album at White Front you got discount tickets for that concert: a world before additional convenient service charges were added to the ticket prices. George Clinton and Parliament Funkadelic at Maverick's Flat over thirty years ago. Bobby Blue Bland & The Total Experience in the Eighties. In 1981 I saw Richard Pryor live for the first time and he blew me away. I sat with Quincy Jones, his wife Peggy Lipton, and Patti Austin at the Hollywood Palladium for the *Richard Pryor Live On The Sunset Strip* performance. That event did have some impact on the spoken word and poetry albums I produced in the Nineties. All Motown acts at the Greek Theater in the late Sixties. The 1969 Stones / Ike and Tina Turner and BB King shows at the L.A. Forum: I went to both shows that night. The Beatles' 1964 Wilshire Theater gig with The Beach Boys and Lesley Gore. In 1971 I saw Marvin Gaye on the corner of 3rd and La Cienega and he smiled and nodded at me. A mind-blow Canned Heat and Sweetwater concert 1968-1969 New Year's Eve. And Larry Taylor, "The Mole," picked us up hitch-hiking home on Figueroa and drove us back to the Fairfax area. A couple of years ago I checked out Charles Lloyd and Billy Higgins at the Jazz Bakery, and Billy did a one-hand drum solo that was magical. I liked watching the 1966 Paul Revere and the Raiders on TV's *Where The Action Is*, and later going to see them in person at the Hullabaloo Club. I had to go with an adult to the show. Great clothes and showmanship. They also had an after-hours show later where for $3.00 you could see a midnight jam by Muddy Waters. I also got to go to the special Sunday matinee all-ages Hullabaloo show by the Mandala from Canada. George Oliver was one of the best white R&B vocalists I ever saw. Domenic Troiano was the guitarist. A neat light show as well. Jimi Hendrix doing "Red House" at Newport '69. Janis Joplin ran on stage and said hello to the crowd. I'm also fond of the 1968 L.A. Forum Doors concert I saw. The first time I saw a singer read poetry on stage in front of 17,505 people. Dented my head, and I started concentrating more on lyricists and discovering poets, especially the ones from the Los Angeles and Venice area. I went alone to see Elvis Presley at the L.A. Forum just after his Comeback Special TV show aired in 1968. One hour of flash bulbs but he sang spectacularly. The last time I saw Sinatra was in 1990: there were moments, but a 1978 show of his was splendid. I took my mother to that show and Los Angeles Dodger baseball broadcaster Vin Scully was there. How L.A. is that? I also dug seeing The Kinks, especially a 1970 third-row-center Civic gig that was a *Village Green* show. Arthur Lee and Love were smoking in a 2003 Knitting Factory show. Mose Allison at a 2004 Jazz Bakery show was classy as ever. Still digging in my mind the late 1997 Bob Dylan El Rey Theater concerts. I saw a few Dylan / Band 1974 concerts that were exceptional as well. I went to the Last Waltz, and I'm in the movie. Muddy Waters was incredible, and The Band were the shit. In my next book on film and music I have a really wonderful interview with Robbie Robertson about *The Last Waltz*. I am still recovering from every Bruce Springsteen and E Street Band show I saw at the Roxy Theater in 1975, and Bruce and band Troubadour gig in 1974. U2 at the Los Angeles Coliseum around 1989, but it might have had something to do with the gal Lisa who took me...Going to the opening of the film *The Monterey Pop International Festival* in 1969 in Beverly Hills was very special, but my mindset might have been influenced by a girl named Lesley I went with. Gypsy Boots was there and that was nice. He handed us health food bars on the street and we talked about *The Steve Allen Show*. A 1971 Beach Boys show I saw in Santa Monica, front row -- believe me, no one slept in line for them then -- was truly magnificent. It was just before they became an oldies band. The set began with "Long Promised Road" from *Surf's Up*. Carl Wilson is still my favorite white rock 'n' roll singer, at the top of the list, along with Gene Pitney, Howard Kaylan, Marty Balin and Burton Cummings. I almost cried when I saw the 1971 Bee Gees concert with full orchestra. I *did* cry when I saw Van Morrison in 1969 or 1970 at the Civic. An *Astral Weeks* and *Moondance* dominated set list and some mind-bending oldies. Fantastic David Bowie "Ziggy" concert in 1972 at the Civic, and I also really enjoyed his 1974 *Diamond Dogs* Universal Ampitheater multiple-show engagement. The 2003 Simon & Garfunkel Staples Center live appearance was stunning most of the night. Ravi Shankar at the Hollywood Bowl in 1967. George Harrison on the stage. Ravi Shankar later at the Roxy Theater in the late Seventies. George Harrison invited me to the recital; I worked for *Melody Maker* at the time. I seem to remember an Albert King Shrine Auditorium show with Creedence Clearwater opening around the same time. CCR no encores. The Impressions at the Greek in 1983. I sang with Stevie Wonder in a 1973 backstage warm-up with his group before a San Diego concert. Still buzzed from that experience. James Brown in 1965 at the Hollywood Bowl, during which he practically played every instrument on stage. So really, how can anything on an MTV Awards show blow my mind? Just seeing Bobby Womack at the bank in 2004 is rock 'n' roll.

Didn't your mother have some sort of connection with the producers of *The Monkees* television series? I mean, rumor actually has you hanging with the Prefabs on the set of my all-time favorite rock 'n' roll movie *Head*, in fact!

Yes. She was a secretary and did dictation for Columbia Pictures and worked for Raybert Productions, who developed and produced the Monkees' series. I really liked going to the studio to watch some of the Monkees episodes being shot at Gower Gulch in Hollywood. I even attended a couple of recording sessions at RCA: I faintly recall being upset or stunned when I heard the Monkees doing Paul Revere and the Raiders' "I'm Not Your Stepping Stone." "Mom! Why are they doing the Raiders' song?" On our kitchen table me and my brother Ken helped my mother assemble Monkees Kits. Did not keep any of them. Mailed and sent them all out and distributed them properly to record stores. We all went to the press conference at the Columbia Ranch in Burbank when the Monkees were introduced to the world. Micky Dolenz and Peter Tork were very friendly in the 1966-1969 period when I would see them. Both always had organic apple juice in their refrigerators. Micky and I are both Pisces. This was just as I started high school a few miles from the Raybert offices. And you bet, I *was* on the set of *Head* a handful of days, plus I went to an early screening and maybe the premiere. Jack Nicholson and Dennis Hopper were very cool, and would be around the studio lot when *Head* was being done. At the time I did not grasp any of the socio-political aspects of that motion picture, but I loved its theme song, "The Porpoise Song," though. But I had a curfew and missed a lot of the filming. I also had classes at Fairfax and didn't really ditch school and also had a job in the late afternoons. A couple of times I went to the set *before* I went to school.

Obviously then, like most of us over the age of thirty, you were raised not only on Top 40 radio, but with one eye at least regularly peeled towards not only *The Monkees* but *The Ed Sullivan Show*, *American Bandstand*, and your local televised dance party and variety shows as well. How, and more importantly WHY, do you feel MTV (most obviously) has fallen far short of ever rising to its early promise of using television wisely and effectively to fulfill the small-screen legacies of Dick Clark, Jack Good et al?

The day MTV went on the air, or really started to saturate and expand in homes around 1984, I was sitting around with Jello Biafra. We were on ■ spoken word tour, and he pointed out that this new MTV figured out a way to sell advertising twenty-four hours a day. So, I knew it was a business from day one. Of course MTV and VH-1 are in bed together now more than ever with the record labels, and MTV and VH-1 will continue producing movies of artists they've been featuring in rotation for years. So the New Frontier everyone thought could emerge with music on television is restrictive and youth-market driven. That channel, and the world in general, is racist and ageist. One unfortunate message from absorbing the rock and pop videos ■ MTV is "If you're not blonde, ■ thin, don't even bother." A revealing wardrobe and ■ glam squad is required as well. These signals sent out regarding required body type priorities, especially to young female viewers, cause false illusions and psychological damage. They also foster a desperate sense of competition. Of course the standards ■ vastly different for men and women: Someone like Billie Holiday based on the physical, or visual demands now, would never have gotten ■ chance on MTV if it was operating in the 1950's.

Her recording of "Strange Fruit" would've made quite the video though, right?

Yes. And you know, it's ■ shame they don't put some older adults into the MTV mix. Fifty and sixty-year-old people in videos, and even as hosts once in ■ while! Or VH-1 tossing some real bones to our elder R&B and jazz musicians? Why can't I see one of our greatest and most original American recording artists, Bob Dylan, ■ the ■■■■ at least once a day on MTV? Half their singer / songwriters have lifted his licks or posture. I mean, would it not be cool if Bo Diddley was aired once a week positioned next to Britney Spears or Ice Cube? Or Usher next to a classic original lineup Temptations? VH-1 and especially MTV go out of their way to erase our pre-1975 world, yet most of their bands broadcast and the aired melodic productions nick their chops and riffs from heavy 1964 Beatles through 1974 glitter-world song structures. At least with the rap music being shown ■ MTV, lyrically some hard words and political topics are being hurled -- when they are not censored.However, there *are* video directors making the leap to feature films. So, MTV and VH-1 are channels, and big stepping stones, for careers from the executive positions to the talent behind the camera. The musicians and bands shown *are* "pawns in the game" ■ Dylan once sang, but lots of folks are aware of this and I think the TV exposure does draw bodies to the gigs, and gooses record sales.

So, approached correctly, television and music can still co-exist and actually enhance one another.

Sure! Years ago Motown acts were always on *The Mike Douglas Show* to promote new records and tours. MTV two decades ago had shows like *120 Minutes*, or *The Cutting Edge* once a month that IRS Records was involved with that I even supplied talent for one year. *Some* alternatives were offered briefly. There *was* a promising future for MTV that could be interesting and ground-breaking. But now MTV is a brand, always self-promoting their logo, more than enough award shows, and programming countless reality shows and *Real World* alongside ■ meat market parade. Sex sells. Or those amateur VH-1 *Behind The Music* "sob stories," ■ Patti Smith once told me about those band and management sanctioned programs. Sadly, last decade MTV ran all these Rock The Vote commercial spots featuring Madonna and Iggy Pop, and I'm pretty sure, or have heard from a couple of different people that both of them had never registered to vote at the time. How pathetic and irresponsible for everyone hustling? I then went into a zone of disengagement from the channel. Yet, even a band's schedule of live dates on MTV can help box office. You know I watched a lot of MTV, VH-1, BET, and other music channels while I was working on *Hollywood Shack Job*. Thankfully I had a book editor that encouraged me to cover the last fifty years of rock music in movies and on television. So I could escape into great videos from yesteryear, and new DVD products of stuff captured in the Fifties and Sixties, to remind me how open-minded the scene once was.

...AND, you could dance to it, as the old catchphrase went.

I *liked* when you actually held the girl in your arms for a slow dance -- kind of a Paul Anka "Put Your Head On My Shoulder" moment – or when you went through the Slauson Line together; not these generic choreographed dance numbers based on group action, predictable audience reactions and routines revolving around prick tease and sexual innuendo. No one even slow twists right next to each other! One time I ■■■ on *American Bandstand* myself, as a dancer, for the debut of both the Mamas and Papas and Bob Lind. Then afterwards, I went to Sunset Boulevard for a *Shindig!* taping that featured the Four Tops. It was their vocals over ■ pre-recorded music backing track, but Levi Stubbs' pleading voice was electric and pretty much kicks ass over anything on MTV, and the Mamas and Papas certainly hold up with a lot of the stuff on MTV and VH-1. I also danced on *Shebang* and the Beau Brummels were the studio guests. I know most of it was a lip-synch job, but it seemed so real. We danced *next* to the band as they played! There wasn't this division that exists today of audience as consumers placed separate from the performers on the sound stage. Dick Clark and Casey Kasem knew this key participatory element many years ago that underscored their shows.

I consider your interviews with the incomparable Andrew Loog Oldham to be the centerpiece of your book. You obviously realize the key role Andrew played in shaping the 1960's by launching his headline-grabbing "alternative Beatles." Would I be correct then in concluding you possess not only a deep affinity towards ALO, but feel he has not been given due credit whatsoever for his many, many accomplishments both pre- AND post-Stones?

The interview I conducted with Andrew not only underscores the affinity I have for his work and influence ■■ my record collection and subsequent journalism / writing endeavors, but also the emotions and gratitude I have for his vast contributions to our universe. So many roads lead back to Andrew, and as you pointed out, he *is* the spine of my book. But I made it ■ point not to make our long-form *Rebel Music* dialogue ■ conversation exclusively about the Rolling Stones. And my own agenda was to really acknowledge and illustrate several events, his pioneering music and record industry ventures, as well as focus on his writing abilities by discussing his autobiographies and some observations on pop music this last half century. In addition, I personally think Andrew's one of the most overlooked and neglected genius characters in all of pop culture. The liner notes he penned on the early Decca (London) Stones albums were sheer filmusic long-line narratives that stung all of us when we first discovered them on those LP sleeves. I'll also add that ALO's *Stoned* and *2Stoned* rank right up there with Kerouac's *On The Road* on my book shelf. That said, I don't want to paint myself like the patrons in France decades ago who rediscovered or re-examined Buster Keaton well after his salad days. Andrew has been ■ public figure for close to forty years, and has contributed, survived and lived in his own rhythm long before I showed up and gave him big play. Still, I felt I owed him a psychic debt that extends back to an era when I became a teenager, and I delivered a public dream that is lined with kudos and appreciation for his rock 'n' roll gestures that changed the world. He lands in Hollywood, for example, meets Sonny Bono and then Jack Nitzsche when he brought the Stones to RCA in Hollywood on their first trip to California. What a welcoming committee! So I hope other writers and pop music scribes and fans pick up the ball and run with it as well, while admiring Andrew's new literary and production work, lecturing, and re-releases of his classic productions and especially his liner notes.

It's amazing, isn't it, that names like Andrew Loog Oldham and Brian Epstein aren't more widely known, not to mention understood, by the world at large ...to say nothing of the music business itself.

That's because for the most part the music media, national publications, the press coverage around the Stones' tours of the last few decades, even the web world and a good deal of the books written about the band, have made conscious decisions to relegate ALO to the margins, railroad his achievements, or leave him out of the documentation completely. But I know that's been fixed now, in part, by the publication of *Rebel Music*. Another factor in Andrew's now larger media profile was the earlier cover story I did on him that appeared in *DisCoveries* magazine a few years ago. My karma is really clean in this department. I don't think a week goes by where someone doesn't say to me over the phone or email, "I didn't know all these things about that Andrew Loog Oldham guy." I asked Steven Van Zandt to do an interview for *Rebel Music*, and when I mentioned Andrew was going to be featured as well, he changed his schedule ■■ I could do an extra hour with him to talk and was deeply touched that I later sequenced them together in my book. Now ALO's even hosting ■ stint on the Sirius satellite edition of Steven's "Underground Garage" radio show, and I hooked them both up. They're pals. That's rock 'n' roll. We're a trinity. Andrew inspires this in people, which is why he blew your mind with the Stones and with his Immediate Records catalogue too. Think of *him* every time you hear the Small Faces' "Tin Soldier."Oldham's discovery, management and production of the early Rolling Stones really did help change the world. So now, when people read the interview that I did with Andrew and quote lines back to me in record stores and in lobbies at concerts, I know I hit the ball over the fence with our chat. And if my own book steers someone to his own available *2Stoned*, that's a bonus. I also know Brian Epstein is being written about more often now; documentaries on him screened at local movie festivals and on Stateside cable TV.

And speaking of literary flow, your chapter on Keith Richards sits happily right there next to Marianne Faithfull's!

The book's arc and story line grooved and concluded with Marianne and Keith, pairing and then bleeding immediately right into my Roger Steffens' reggae world epilogue. My interview with Keith actually started at a recording studio when the Stones were cutting *Bridges to Babylon* and I was talking drums with Jim Keltner, one of my true friends in rock 'n' roll. The guy has always looked out for me since I was a teenager. Besides genetics, I owe my memory and hair to him! Anyway, we were talking in the studio lounge about Eddie Cochran on *Town Hall Party*, the L.A. music show of the late Fifties, and a voice from another room pops out and it's Keith. "Eddie played drums on a lot of his record tracks," he tells me by way of introduction! And he loved talking for the book about recording his Wingless Angels album. He's a soulful cat and introduced me to the band. Charlie Watts is my favorite drummer. Do I need to say anything else? If a girl likes the way Charlie plays, I'll probably go out with her.

I was also extremely relieved to read your talks with Marianne do SO much to delve into and explore the artist, and woman, beneath all of the Mars Bar-coated mythology and misinformation. Personally speaking, I've often associated Marianne Faithfull, her life, and her career with that of Brian Wilson, another seminal figure who has not only survived, but actually THRIVED over the years (and over supposedly insurmountable odds to say the least). Compare and contrast, if you can, these two true Rebel Musicians.

Marianne and Brian... I go back a long time with these folks, and comparing them and contrasting them is both easy and difficult. They are not alike. Marianne has had it much harder than Brian, partially due to her economic situation, and the fact that among her drugs of choice for a period of time was heroin. It was *cigarettes* that took

the top register off Brian's once gorgeous voice, while smoking only made Marianne's vocal chords huskier and more alluring. Marianne has confidence and an ego, sometimes arrogant and defiant, and is a ham; something that has been happening over decades and serves her life and personal appearances and recordings. Both like melodies; both love the music of Phil Spector and Motown. Brian is reclaiming his confidence these days, and seems not nearly as depressed as I remember him from many years ago. Marianne is a way more daring artist though, in terms of chance taking, duet albums, movie roles, theater plays, seventy-five-city tours, embracing younger talent like PJ Harvey, and not being exclusively tarred by the Rolling Stones' paint brush. Brian, however, will always have a tattoo that partially reads *Pet Sounds* and Beach Boys oldies. Although the new *Smile* album and tour will further establish Brian as a more serious American composer. Brian and Marianne have been in public recovery, which I applaud them for, but I always feel that stuff in the media should be kept to a minimum. Still, I can see that people reading their life stories, or hearing Brian explain his emotional framework or his own history of depression on *The Larry King Show*, can be of help to others. I am just so glad both of them are alive and working. And Marianne is a woman. Something that has both helped and hampered her life and career. She is a very bright and well-read person. With our conversation in *This Is Rebel Music*, you get to really know her journey. From her own words and vocal rhythm, without me pushing the interview to accommodate my personal needs. She is ■ incredible talker, a real yenta, has a memory of chronology and some environment. She's also a real good hustler: Check out her record label jumping! I admire her determination, and she always works old school and new school simultaneously. A real survivor. I mean, anyone who can exist independent of the Rolling Stones' orbit -- like Andrew too -- after being close and inside the flame, and *still* participate in the here and the now is a real trooper in my book. I really dig her big time. Brian Wilson is not a really good interview. He gives short answers and "OK" responses. It works for him because the reporters and writers have to write more about him, or get quotes from his concentric musical family. But he's not a man of words. That's why there are some co-writers and lyricists on his classic songs. He's also written amazing songs like "This Whole World" and "Til I Die" all by himself, too. But his *melodies* are the way he talks. I'm happy he is working and touring. He proved to be a very strong individual, especially since he became ■ active in the music business. I catch him around town a lot 'cause he lives nearby, and when I see him eating I leave him alone and I know he appreciates the space. Brian really enjoys food. He amusingly said something in a parking lot ■ few years ago like "Have you ever asked me for an autograph?" And I said not really, but can you sign my copy of *Beach Boys Today*? So I quickly darted home and he inked it. And that lead afterwards to a whole chat about Phil Spector, the sound baffles at Gold Star studios and recording techniques. When guitarist / producer / jazz legend Barney Kessel died this year, Brian also provided a quote to me about him for a couple of tributes / obits I was writing. And he made the quote specific to Barney playing on *Pet Sounds*. Yes, that's BK ■ "Wouldn't It Be Nice." I do gain some strength from Brian and Marianne. When I read they are working and happy, I realize they have dealt with their demons and are productive in society.

And speaking of Brian Wilson, when will you, as a native Angeleno, be publishing YOUR much-needed insights into the Beach Boys' own California saga?

I tried for many years to publish some of my reporting on the Beach Boys. All the book publishers I approached in the Seventies and well into the Eighties couldn't deal with my offerings that were based pretty much on recording, songwriting and band activities, not tied to chaos, dirt, drugs, sex, sadness and tabloid mentality. I body-surfed with Dennis Wilson at Zuma Beach. But those anecdotes ain't gonna sell books. I carry them with me, and don't really exploit them as an author. I've never had a book agent, either. But I've been filmed by director Brian Chidister on a documentary he is making about Brian and the Brother Records 1969-1974 Beach Boys era. Writer / director / producer David Leaf lensed ■ for his *Beautiful Dreamer: Brian Wilson and the Story of Smile* movie. The film also includes fascinating on-camera interviews with Andrew Loog Oldham, Lou Adler, Burt Bacharach, Jimmy Webb, Richard Williams and Sir George Martin. It is a must-see film and is breath-taking in scope and execution. Besides, Brian Wilson wrote the back cover blurb for my *Rebel* book. He respects me and knows I'm a lifer. That's what really counts, and I'm the one keeping the statistics. Brian has always realized I have always pretty much followed the music, and he of all people knows about dreams, records and plans that have been shattered, suspended or put on hold. But we *both* kept at it.

Traveling down that long promised road, so to speak!

And I still have fans and friends that ask me about old interviews I did with Brian for *Melody Maker* and *Phonograph Record* magazine in the Seventies. The Internet has displayed my writings, and I don't even post them! So a new crowd of music geeks and hardcore record collectors and pop fiends are seeing these texts and cribbing from my action. It's fine ...especially if they buy *Holland*. Around 1974 I wrote the *Los Angeles Times* Sunday Calendar record review on the Beach Boys' *Endless Summer* package that re-ignited the gold rush around their Capitol Records catalogue. It was over a million circulation paper at the time. I've had people come up to me for decades who took another chance on the Beach Boys just because they read that feature review. I'm still waiting for my gold record from the label, by the way! The fact that Marilyn Wilson called the paper to track me down, then invite me up to her home with Brian for milk and cookies is one memory I draw on yearly. Recently I did some work for legendary record executive Russ Regan, who gave the Beach Boys their name when he worked as a promo man at the Candix Records label. Russ also signed Elton John for America, and discovered Berry White. He also ran the incredible Loma Records label for Reprise. Things happen for ■ reason.

Speaking of which, I was very glad indeed to see an entire "Rebel Music" chapter devoted to Berry Gordy, Jr., as I believe he and his story have simply not been given a clear enough voice within, nor a proper historical and musical link been made from it to, our current musical environment.

It's the music *business* now, not the *music* business anymore. My chapter on Berry Gordy Jr. concentrates on the music, and particularly his legacy. Kim Fowley's comments about Gordy that end the profile -- Kim, then working out of a phone booth at his local gas station, was nevertheless hired as Motown's first white west coast promo man in 1960 -- says a lot about Berry's ground-breaking musical and business achievements and decisions in the late Fifties and all through the 1960's. I wanted BG to have a forum, as well as discussing his spoken word label. My only regret is that I only had an hour with him, and the interview wasn't long enough. Like great Motown records, it was a short blast but a real sizzle. Still, we all learn about his life, his reflections ■ Motown artists, plus the text will bring you back to some Motown sides you've forgotten about. Gordy and I also go step-by-step on how he wrote his autobiography *To Be Loved*. I had a very supportive editor and publisher -- after all, I'm on the CounterCulture imprint -- who never once complained how *Rebel Music* would showcase other artist-published autobiographies in our book. That's what I'm talking about: ■ example of collaboration, not competition.

Which brings us to the dilemma of why, and to what effect, do you think today's lingering Black Station / White Station demographic mindset has stifled, and perhaps even lessened, the impact of the rebel musician upon mainstream culture?

The real rebels and mavericks always reside *outside* the mainstream ...until someone cuts a big enough check and the outsider / rebel product gets distributed more widely in the retail pipeline. It's always been about access. The audience going to shows at the big halls and arenas can afford the tickets, so the show is geared for them -- more hits in their set list -- and the buyer and concert-goer is not as demanding as they were many years ago, where you had to sing for your supper and deliver to get over. A number of current rotating radio music participants and talking heads on entertainment or music television want to be famous, or sell more units, not improve their craft. Some acts tend to become performing puppets. I can understand that. But it's akin to most stand-up comedians these days that don't rail against the system anymore; their goals are a TV sitcom from jump street. So now the *real* rebel music and rebel artists have their own web pages and fan base to support them. Word of mouth is still the link to expansion. Fanzines and Internet chat groups are the communication sites that house and propel rebel music and artists these days. Also, unlike the Sixties and a portion of the Seventies, it is a tough economic climate these days for everyone. Years ago, a greater sense of community existed; rock bands and relationships could develop over a period of months and perform in so many venues generating food money, while rents were cheaper. Non-mainstream artists then didn't have to have two or three jobs going so they could nurture and prepare their repertoire until they were signed by a record label or management company. Health insurance wasn't a major concern years ago; That medical check was traditionally or usually cut then for new equipment or rent and rehearsal rooms! Unlike the bands and artists of thirty years ago, the 2004 corporate mindset now is geared more for the gate-keeper and the bean-counter who market and control the game. The artist is even lower on the totem pole. Invading the mainstream culture, let alone existence, is much more difficult.

Still, you and I can both easily recall those historic days when the latest seven-inch marvel from Motown proudly took its place right there in the Top Ten alongside all our favorite Beatles, Beach Boys and even Roger Miller hits. But honestly, can Outkast alone really be expected to "pick up where Sly and the Family Stone left off," as so many musical pundits are now fond of proclaiming?

Right now, it seems like just about everyone is trying to enter and exist in the music business in accommodation roles with safe, three-minute songs. Who really wants to go blow like John Coltrane and other such artists who delivered long album selections? One observation I have, and I hope it comments on your question, is that for the last ten or twenty years -- especially the last decade with more cable TV stations, more music artists in movies and music -format programs -- as an audience it means we often see or view the artists and acts *before* we really get to hear them. From the 1950's clear through the 1980's, when you heard a song on the radio -- especially in the Sixties when it was ■ 45 RPM world -- you dug the tune and wanted to see pictures of the person or act. Maybe a glimpse ■ *The Ed Sullivan Show* or *Shindig!* Or the regional pop TV music shows of the time. But *radio* was your pulse beat. Now, you often see the acts first, and *then* check out their recordings. With MTV and VH-1, the videos are jammed at your eyes and ears, then like a Pavlov dog or the Laurence Harvey portrayed character in *The Manchurian Candidate* you're programmed to go into your chain store and purchase the product. And with downloading, most people, especially college kids with demanding reading schedules, just want to hear the sounds, and don't even give a fuck about the lyric sheets and information inside the artwork. It is a visual entertainment arena more than ever. In the old days on the screen it was about pimple cream to cover up skin disruptions; now it's about changing your face and whole body. Record labels now market artist lifestyle products propelled by hours of TV news

shows, programs, news breaks and commercials about diets, police arrests, fashion, juicy hookups, politically correct or often covered and obvious social issues, birth control products, irrelevant awards shows, numerous program blocks about getting your breasts fixed or plastic surgery, or how guys can get their hair back, paint it darker, ■ have your penis work better, or make it longer. As my mother said, "Harvey ...It's a sick world." Musician and activist John Wood -- he invented the bumper sticker that reads "Drum Machines Have No Soul" and whose father Randy founded Dot Records and produced thirty-seven million sellers – said, "People in the Fifties and Sixties made records live in the studio, direct to two track records at night; they didn't go to award shows every other week or once a month to be seen and work the room." Only last year I was sitting and interviewing the Funk Brothers on Hollywood Boulevard, and we could hear some *American Idol* participants in the next building singing one of the Motown hits and getting huge applause. I could walk into that room with drummer Uriel Jones, who played on a lot of those hits, and no one would know who he was. And the major record labels and management companies are all in collusion and charting together. That's fine. It's business. It's so contrived and pathetic, but I have no real relationship to it, yet I'm happy some songwriter and publisher is getting a pay-day from the series.

True or False, your most unforgettable character (as *Reader's Digest* used to say): Jack Nitzsche? What an incredible interview with him in "Rebel Music."

Yes. I was born at Queen of Angels Hospital Los Angeles, the same place he died at. Jack had the most pure musical talent, both in arranging and producing as well as talent scouting. Jack was on many of my favorite records. Not just his immortal arrangements for Phil Spector, but vinyl with Jackie DeShannon, Neil Young, Bob Lind's dreamy "Elusive Butterfly." All the numerous studio sessions with the Rolling Stones. I mean, Jack played tambourine on "Satisfaction," and the story goes he took the tambourine for a second take of the tune after Charlie Watts or Mick Jagger banged it for the first take and Nitzsche said, "too white boy sounding!" He also possessed an encyclopedic knowledge of music from 1940 through 1980. Not as a record collector, but *beyond*, 'cause he arranged and orchestrated big budget sessions as well as cool rock bands. He educated so many people to how the music was created and what musicians played on the sessions. Jack explained to both me and Denny Bruce (record producer / talent manager and original 1965 Mothers of Invention drummer) who Gary Chester was: he did the drums on Gene Pitney's "Every Little Breath I Take." I loved the colorings and keyboard work Jack did on records 'cause I knew some of the records and arrangers he respected (Billy May, Stan Applebaum, Leonard Rosenman). I'm totally in awe of his work on *The T.A.M.I. Show* and his big band-like arrangements for that classic rock and soul music event. By the way, every Motown act on the bill asked Jack for copies of his *T.A.M.I. Show* charts.I really liked his Monkees "Porpoise Song" arrangement, and Denny Bruce played tambourine on the track. I love Jack's production of the Crazy Horse album, and his single-finger piano hits on Neil Young's "When You Dance," which is a terrific pop gem. His arranging and work on Buffalo Springfield's "Expecting To Fly" is a dream. Jack's production / arranging and playing all over the debut Neil Young album is landmark in sound and delivery. Nitzsche's "The Lonely Surfer" theme still holds up over forty years later, and even informed the Rolling Stones' "Blue Turns To Grey" recording. I also play some of his movie music soundtracks like *Performance* and *The Hot Spot*, two films I discuss with him in *Rebel Music*. For many years all through the Sixties I would see him around town. Even as a kid. Record shops, concerts, TV shows, The Hollywood Ranch Market... always mysterious in sunglasses and a velour. I really got to further know him when he was married to Buffy Saint-Marie and I was living with her keyboardist for a two-year period. She also recorded with Jack on movie scores. So we were then both guys hooked up with musicians and performers in domestic scenes. We did some Indian meals together around some of his Leonard Peltier benefit work. I went to a bunch of his Mink DeVille sessions at Dave Hassinger's studio. So, we had some time to hang, talk, nosh and go into areas away from rock 'n' roll. I learned a lot of things from Jack. He would always point to the underdog, America's neglect of the native American Indian, the racism of the record business, and so many spiritual things. The thing with Jack was that in one conversation you could talk about pussy and recording and mixing techniques simultaneously. He used to say about his tenure with Spector, "What an education!" And I can say that same thing about Nitzsche. Jack respected my own studio productions with some poets and especially the efforts I did to advance people of color, even though it cost me lots of potential employment. He had empathy to wounds I received from mean people in the performing arts and music business. Jack was always amazed I never got a grant for my poetry recording work. I would tell him people like him were going to be in my book one day. And he would say, "putting me in is not ■ good idea..."

I'm SO glad you ignored his advice!

My Nitzsche profile and interview is from a 1988 taping and another 2000 interview. He was unforgettable because he was both shy *and* a tyrant at times. He could be so sweet and loving and then, sometimes depending on alcohol or his drug at the time, so wicked and mean. He was brilliant and charming, but full of self-doubt and anger. He was sort of an early punk rocker in terms of attitude. To this day I still go a few times a year to Musso and Frank's Grill in Hollywood, one of Jack's favorite restaurants. I sit at his regular table if it is available. Recently, maybe because I am eating meat again after ten years, I ordered a rare steak and vodka mix. I don't really drink alcohol at all, but I was celebrating a birthday, and the waiter impulsively commented, "that's exactly what Keith Richards of the Rolling Stones orders! He's my best tipper. Ask the bartender, too." That's another reason that makes Jack Nitzsche unforgettable. I had a friend tell Keith the story afterwards and he laughed. I had no idea Keith had been going to this restaurant for decades when he was in Los Angeles. And, naturally, it was down the same Hollywood Boulevard block from where I actually purchased my copy of the English version of *Aftermath*. So far, along with the comments and response about Andrew Loog Oldham and Ray Manzarek from my initial book reviews, the Nitzsche keeps getting referenced and mentioned. That makes me feel good. His friends appreciate my efforts; his son, Jack Jr., actually drove over and gave me a photo when I was putting *Rebel* together. Jack was even buried on the same street ■ Gold Star Studio in East Hollywood. It might sound corny but he always stressed: Be truthful and get to the core of the music. Not the surface layer which the media and most fans and followers usually relate to and support. Jack also did great impressions of the suits at record labels and movie studios that covered 1960 through 2000. He really hated phony people, and like Keith Richards would tell you exactly what he was thinking if you asked a question. I do have a fond Hollywood memory walking down Franklin, from ■ session at Capitol Records, and there was Jack cruising in his T-bird, yelling out the window, "I'm going to New Orleans!" I followed his wheels up Highland when the light turned green, and knew I might ever see him again. I must say my phone and voice mail was flooded with a number of calls when he was on *Cops*, ■ police reality TV show. He got arrested on Hollywood Boulevard with a concealed pistol gun after some punk stole his hat off his head and Jack then went tracking him down for a physical showdown. Nitzsche was busted and braced on camera. On his way to the jail cell while waiting for bail to be posted, an officer kept prodding Jack, "Keep moving, Academy Award winner..." Some people around him made sure he had some extra years on the planet and I'm grateful for the job they did on his behalf. I miss him.

Wrapping up then, what's been happening lately in the Wide World of Harvey Kubernik?

The last half decade I've been concentrating on writing and book-related areas. I've helped a lot of authors with their own books in research, production, photo editing and fact-checking. I must have name credits in over one hundred books. I chose an arena of service and collaborating with others. I was taught to help first and *then* receive. Boy, big mistake, and definitely not applicable to music, books or show business. I took an extended break from the recording studio. I've chosen to do my own literary thing and still help and aid others. I do a lot of humanitarian things. Hey, I'm from the Sixties! In the last few years I've been supporting, working, interacting and advising everyone from Chris Darrow, Caroline (Dourley), David Carr, Dan and David Kessel, Kim Fowley, Cosmo Topper, various independent musicians, producers and studio owners, including Robbie Rist and Richard Derrick, whose label issued ■ D. Boon album. I am a consultant for Little Steven's Underground Garage weekly syndicated radio show. I was the Executive Producer of the Toulouse Engelhardt / Remi Kabaka album *A Child's Guide To Einstein*, and provided guidance and received a helmsman credit on the debut Tea album. I have thank you credits on all the Elvis Costello packages on Rhino Records. I also penned the liner notes to the just released Rocket album, *Too Hot To Be Bothered*. I've had some radio meetings that ■■ in development regarding production, writing and on-air hosting. I still prepare select music band and recording artist biographies, 'cause I like to write them ...and my fee has gone up since *This Is Rebel Music* was published. Keeps me really in touch with the independent audio world and new artists. I still do the occasional interview for magazines and newspapers. I interviewed Patti Smith for *HITS* and conducted an extensive Q and A with director Mel Stewart around his *Wattstax* music documentary for *Goldmine*. I penned tributes on Barney Kessel and Johnny Ramone that appeared in *MOJO*, and received a special thanks credit in their California Music issue. My writing I feel will lead me to some answers and physical grammar that will fuel some desires, and that will help the planet. I'm trying to be open for the moment. I've performed a few times in public. Some readings; the most recent was in 1995 at the MET Theater in a Rock 'N' Roll Reading series I co-produced and curated. The re-formed Doors also played. I like being on the radio -- when I'm invited – talking and reading. About live shows, I saw so many people who didn't merit or deserve the gigs, or got them through devious ways

-- welcome to Hollywood! -- I never really got too involved in doing performances myself. I decided early on to put most of my energy and team concepts somewhere else like producing, writing and music consultancy / communications. But I'm getting some interesting offers these days for personal appearances. I've been asked to be in a couple of films that I'm considering. I need to get these books out first, and then all sorts of options and challenges will open up. But probably not locally. I really don't expect anything in my own city. As Coleman Hawkins told the critic / author Stanley Dance many years ago, "No one likes hometown." Thankfully though, people like Allen Ginsberg took the time to explain some things to me such as why poets like Kenneth Patchen, who lived around he corner from Stanford University for eight years, never got ■ reading on that campus. Ginsberg said to build a body of work, and *then* things will come to you. I'm doing it.

This Is Rebel Music: The Harvey Kubernik InnerViews is available through the University of New Mexico Press. It is, need I reiterate, Required Reading.

For further information on all of Harvey's latest activities, simply contact him care of: Neptune's Kingdom Press P.O Box 406 Pasadena, CA 91102-0406

THE FINAL CURTAIN

Gentleman John Battles is a great fan of all and a good friend to many of the legends of Rock & Roll. Here he pays final respects to some of his favorite artists who have recently made the transition from mortal to immortal

HASIL ADKINS - My good friend (and fellow "One Man Band," if labeling is your thing), Bloodshot Bill, called me from Montreal ▪▪ morning, but he wasn't his usual, chuckle-headed self. His voice took on a somber tone when he told me," I'm afraid you're going to have to add someone else to your column...Hasil Adkins just died." The details he had were sketchy, but they proved to be closer to the truth than the various, wildly contradictory, reports surrounding his death that I would hear for the next couple of weeks. Apparently,.Hasil had been hanging out ▪▪ his front porch, when a crazed neighbor in a 4x4 struck him, and just drove away. I can't say whether or not the driver had a vendetta against Hasil, ▪▪ whether he was whacked out of his skull on some kind of lethal cocktail of moonshine and meth, or all of the above. I'm told that he's since been apprehended, but, no, that won't bring our boy back. As the whole plot continues to unravel like a very disturbing *Law and Order-West Virginia Edition*, it may be a long time before the mystery is truly solved. The autopsy report ruled that the cause of death was a heart attack. He was found dead in his house by some friends who had previously arranged to give him a ride that day. After examining his body it was determined that that he had been dead for about a week. One can only deduce that he survived the hit and run attack, committed in his own front yard (which, I'm told, rests at the bottom of a very steep ramp, a difficult maneuver, drunk or sober, which leads one to believe that there was a plan), went inside, probably tried to call for help on the telephone, but didn't make it. But, you know what? Fuck all this depressing shit, LET'S THINK ABOUT LIVIN'!!! To say that Hasil was the true Father of what we now call "D.I.Y." is like saying Dali went in for unusual facial hair. His home recordings, done on crude reel-to-reel recorders in a shed influenced the "Lo-Fi" movement tremendously. Did any of his "Chillun'" come close to the warmth and the rawness of his best recordings? Is Sophia Loren a man? Still, Hasil reveled in all the favorable attention he was receiving by the early to mid 80s. The Cramps' great (and hilarious) cover of his signature song, "She Said," and Norton Records' subsequent release of a plethora of albums and singles (and considerably fewer, though worthy of your perusal, releases on labels like Big Beat, Bughouse, Fat Possum and Jungle House) guaranteed him a cult following that will only grow greater in death. When I first met him, ▪ his first engagement in Chicago, he struck me as being both nervous and incredibly depressed before his fans (besides MY geek ass!) had started filing in (and, when they did, I found myself acting as "interpreter," because, having lived in The South, I was the only one around who understood ▪ word he was saying). Yes, he was slamming down shots like they were water (they WERE watered down to ensure there'd even BE a show), and I saw him go through a pack of smokes in ten minutes, BUT, there was something deeper going on. I tried to engage him in conversation, and I found that I could have cut through his depression with a knife. It made me feel about as sad as he appeared to be. Didn't he know that all his fans were excited to the point of euphoria about finally getting to see him live? His nose was about to make contact with the floor, when, ▪ last, he spoke; "Man," he paused, "Man.. I can't tell you how much it means to me, all you people coming out to see me, and over in Europe, too, man, I can't tell you what that means to me." (I don't have Hasil's lifetime tour itinerary, but I've read that he did AND didn't go to Europe). While his capacity for sadness seemed vast, I don't know if even he knew how hilarious he could be. Check out the "Live in Chicago" CD on Bughouse. Hasil even gets in some political humor: " You know, they campaignin' over in Washington, y'know, thet Clinton-BOOSH? Well, we got a campaign to turn The White House into The HUNCHIN' HOUSE!" Later in the show, he offers this (Prophetic) observation : "Well, if Clinton has anything to do with it, we might get The White house into The Hunchin' House, after all!" It was usually an adventure, with very strange forces ▪ play, whenever Hasil came to town. When he was scheduled to play at the Intuit Gallery (a museum, of sorts, dedicated to Oustider Art) a few years back, he made a sidetrip to the 'burbs to catch a Chuck Berry/Little Richard concert being held in an indoor venue underneath a racetrack (He had permission from the gallery to do so), but it started getting dangerously close to showtime. By the time the opening act had practically exhausted his repertoire, my friends and I were outside, standing vigil, hoping that Hasil would turn up soon. Suddenly, ▪ beat-to-shit, hand-painted, putrid purple and strychnine blue van, ca. 1968, pulled up. I said to a friend, "How much do you wanna bet Hasil is in there?" Sure enough, Hasil emerged from the vehicle in a peculiar haze of smoke (I'm not saying the "Eu De Wackee-Backee" scent was coming from him, and I'm witholding the names of the actual smokers of this strange weed. This isn't Dragnet). Hasil was stalling, preferring to hold court outside, but, eventually, he made it to the "stage" (there really wasn't one), and what transpired was something between a Boy Scout singalong (if you count drums being propelled from where they stand and amps being knocked over, face-down, ▪▪ Boy Scout fare) and my first real Rock n' Roll show (my Mom arranged to have my Brother's High School Rock Band play in the basement of the library where she worked in the early 70s, making my Mom hip decades before it was hip for Moms to be hip). We all sat on the floor, in a circle, around the Hunchmeister, while he played some pretty credible Blues (even the album on Fat Possum did little to display his oft-hidden Blues talents), spirited renditions of "Tutti Frutti" and "Johnny B.Goode," with childlike enthusiasm befitting the two Rock masters he had just seen for the first time, and my favorite later Haze composition (I don't know if he even recorded it), "Who Took Your Clothes Off Last Night?" There was an All-American sickness about the whole affair. Even though the show that produced the live CD on Bughouse was probably still my favorite, this time, we got all the craziness, AND he finished every song he started! I was out of town when Hasil would give his farewell show in Chicago (which, I'm told, was a disaster), but I did see what would, sadly, be his last show ever, at The Vegas Rockaround Festival ▪ September, 2004. In true Bizarro World fashion, the show was M.C.'ed by Kim Fowley, who introduced Rudy Ray Moore, who did a (much too short) comic monologue, and, in turn, introduced Hasil, saying, "Here's a man who does everything by hisself! I think he even FUCK hisself!!!"). Hasil took it well, even putting his arm, good-naturedy, around Rudy Ray before starting his set. What transpired was neither the worst, nor the best, show I'd ever seen him do. He was making use of that same license to be inconsistent that Johnny Thunders once held, and Jerry Lee still keeps handy, and the audience, many of whom, I learned, had never seen him before , weren't having it. I saw several people leave, while others stuck it out, looking bewildered to say the least. There was a good portion of the wallet chain and pomade crowd, who never supported Hasil in Chicago, and, while it was good to see them at this mostly Garage-oriented festival (Rockabilly and Garage, of course, go together like peanut butter and jelly, but, since the early '90s, disregarding one for the other has largely been the status quo), it seemed that Hasil, the one act on the entire bill with Rockabilly tendencies, wasn't making ▪ lot of new converts. The old time vets knew that you had to take Hasil Adkins on his own terms, or not ▪▪ all. You might get your nut, and you might only get "moments." This wasn't Broadway, this was art, and art sure ain't pretty. Still when Ronnie Weiser, of Rollin' Rock Records fame, asked me, "John, is Hasil always this inconsistent?" I just thought everybody knew, so, I told him, "No...He's usually MORE inconsistent." Nevertheless, he had many ▪▪▪ great shows left in him. With a constitution rivaling that of Jerry Lee, there's no reason this man, who was robbed of the chance to see his 70th birthday, couldn't have kept performing and recording had he lived to make 80. But, we should be glad that we had him here as long as we did.

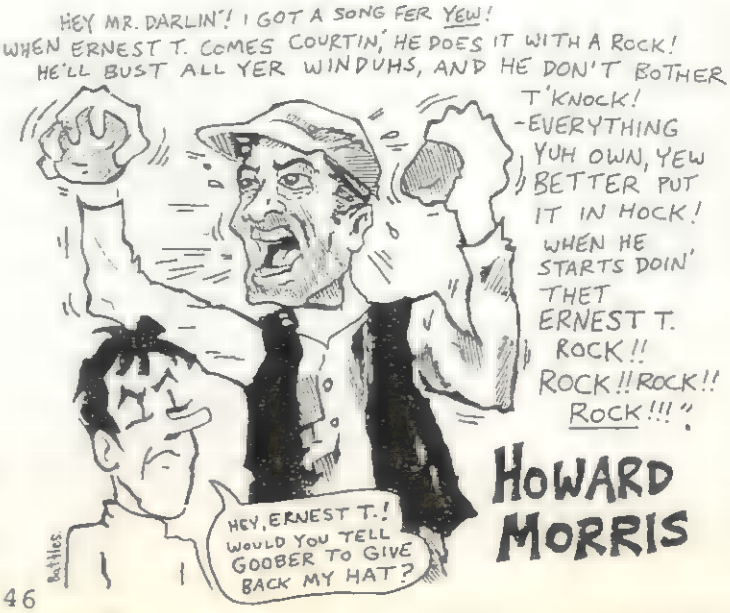
JOHNNIE JOHNSON -The last few years of Johnson's life were fueled by controversy, but still accompanied by great music. For those who don't know, Johnson was Chuck Berry's original pianist, playing on all those great

Chess 45s (albums, too. Anyone who thinks 50s Rockers never made great albums needs to hear Berry's "After School Sessions," and then go soak their heads if they're not convinced), but, it wasn't always that way. After a stint with The USMC in WWII, Johnson was fronting The Sir John Trio in the early 50s, when he met Berry ■ a New Year's Eve 1952 gig in St. Louis, and quickly made Berry a featured sideman. Chuck soon took hold of the reins, receiving top billing as a solo artist with Johnnie in the role of sideman, a demotion he frequently insisted he was comfortable with, seeing as how Chuck was more of ■ natural frontman than he. Chuck also proved to be a phenomenally gifted songwriter, with a Country sense of narrative and ■ subtle Jazz inflection, as both a singer and a guitarist. With Chuck at the helm, the band seemed poised for success, but, fans would later inquire, ■ what cost? A few years back, a zealous lawyer and fan stepped into the picture, insisting that Johnson was entitled to several co-composer credits, meaning that, if he could prove his case in court, Johnson would be owed royalties on songs known publicly, for years, as Chuck Berry 's own compositions. This is where the controversy comes in. Johnnie never seemed comfortable with the suggestion that he co-wrote any of the numbers he and Chuck recorded together. He'd stated in interviews that, while he felt it was ■ combined effort putting those songs together, he didn't feel he had a hand in the actual songwriting process. According to Johnson, Berry came up with the lyrics and the general pattern for each song, and Johnny added his own embellishments where needed. Should Johnny have received some royalties even if his role went no deeper than his own description? It's sort of like saying that George Harrison and Brian Jones, were they living, should recieve a piece of their respective, iron clad, bandmate's composer credits, to which some fans would agree.

Johnson's contributions were vast, but the case was dismissed, as the court decided that too many years had lapsed. When I went to St. Louis to attend Chuck Berry's 75th birthday concert in 2001, The local papers were awash with reports about the case, which was coming to a crescendo. Both Berry and Johnson were quick to point out that the controversy had not affected their friendship, though it seemed unlikely that the two would share a stage together again. At any rate, the birthday show proved to be an artistic, as well as fiscal, success. At one point, I could see Johnny standing sidestage, away from the lights, but surely visible from certain points of the room. Chuck sneaked back a few times between songs, and I could see them exchanging friendly banter and hugging. It did my heart good to see the two men getting along so famously, but, I wondered, "Is Johnny going to join Chuck on stage?" It never happened, but I could see that the testimony each man had made to the importance of the other's friendship was not just talk. Before the case, Johnny and Chuck still performed together off and on. It's amazing to note that, after their original partnership dissolved in 1973, Johnny hadn't even played before a live audience until Keith Richard procured him to play at the concert in St. Louis for the film *Hail! Hail! Rock n'' Roll* (which first brought Johnnie's contributions to light, as it pointed out that Berry's tunes seemed to be composed on piano compositions not guitar). Johnny fell right back into his role as though he'd been the wind behind Chuck's sails all the while. Check out the rehearsals, and the concert itself. Johnnie Johnson was not pissing around. I wish I could say the same for Chuck, but, for all Keef's noble attempts to put together a decent Chuck Berry cncert, the Man of the Hour treated it like a throwaway. You can see Richards, in rehearsal, trying to show Chuck Berry how to sound like Chuck Berry again, but Chuck Berry wasn't having any of it. You can also see Chuck telling Keith he was going to change the key mid-song, and Keith visibly nodding and saying "no," at which point, he realized he'd have to tell a well-rehearsed, all-star band to "Wing it, boys!" But, Johnson wasn't having any of that shit. His eyes ablaze, he hammered out the right notes at the right time in a manner that seemed to say, "This may not be my show, but it might as well be." Despite Chuck's taking what should have been a great performance, and making it, at best, a good one, the film is highly enjoyable and recommended. As Keef put it, "Johnnie had an innate feeling for complementing guitar, just as Pinetop Perkins and Otis Spann had done for Muddy Waters." I've always felt the same, as Chuck's band was built on the same premise as the other great Chess Records artists (minus the harmonica). It was, of course, aimed at the kids, but, if you think Berry and Co. couldn't work a good Blues, you are, again, advised to hear "After School Sessions." Of course, Chuck first went to Chess on Muddy Waters' tip, and even worked with Willie Dixon. The combination of Berry, Johnson and Dixon could have been, unbeatable as a live act, but, Chuck opted for the fast buck, frequently eschewing his own band in favor of unrehearsed hacks. There were exceptions, especially when Johnson was hired to keep the ship from sinking, but the expression "Chuck Berry Syndrome" rings true today when a backing band's talents are not befitting of the artist they're backing. Chuck and Johnnie, on a good night, could make the listener forget everything unsatisfactory they've heard, or been told, in the past. Don't wanna hear 'em playing Bono, or zither music from Milano, it's much too late for Back To Mono, SO, KEEP-A-ROCKIN' THAT PEE-YAH-NO!!!".

FRANK GORSHIN - Like most people, my first exposure to the late, great Frank Gorshin was through his brilliant characterization as The Riddler on *Batman*. At a time when bigger name actors were climbing over each other to get on the TV show that epitomized Pop Culture circa '66 as much as The Beatles had in 1964, Frank Gorshin put in probably the finest ongoing performance on a show that actually encouraged overacting. While *Batman* was/is great fun, due in no small part to Gorshin, his career wasn't limited to playing campy criminal masterminds. He actually had a background in singing, though his Novelty 45 of "The Riddler" might reinforce suspicions that actors shouldn't make records (don't get me wrong, it's a great, and very rare, piece of wax). He also built a large following in Vegas, beginning with an engagement at The Flamingo, opening for Bobby Darin. After *Batman*, he quickly became a headliner in Las Vegas' finest venues (most, or all, of which no longer exist). Theatre was his passion, as well as his paycheck, for the rest of his life, and he appeared in productions like *Guys and Dolls*, *Peter Pan* and *Promises, Promises*, frequently with touring companies. He also appeared in a bizarre array of films, such as Otto Preminger's insane LSD comedy, *Skidoo* (many other former bat-villains were there for the ride, and Preminger himself had played Mr. Freeze!), Terry Gilliam's highly acclaimed *12 Monkeys*, and even a part in one of latter day visionary, Guy Maddin's, films. Not surprisingly, he reprised his Riddler personna in the 1960s *Batman* movie (now available as a budget DVD with cool extras, so if you have kids, or your siblings or friends do, turn 'em on to this! Save the children), and the TV movies, *Challenge of The Superheroes* and *Legend of The Superheroes* (I saw the former when it came on originally. I remember it being extremely goofy, but the costumes were great. It has turned up recently as a bootleg), plus the recent *Search For The Batmobile*, in which Gorshin went for one last ride with former co-stars Adam West, Burt Ward and Julie Newmar. One of Gorshin's earliest roles, however, was in the low budget J.D./ Hot Rod feature, *Dragstrip Girl*. Ultimately, despite many talents, his versatile impressions have ensured Frank that The Riddler would never become an albatross. Though he claimed to only be able to effectively impersonate about 50 celebrities, a pittance next to Rich Little, his attention to detail had no equal. He BECAME anyone he sought to impersonate, even joking (?) that his friend Little, was the only star he'd tried, and failed, to impersonate! His recent touring show, *Say Goodnight, Gracie*, in which he did a one-man tribute to George Burns drew rave reviews. I never met Gorshin, but I was in the same building, once. I went to my last (to date) comic book convention in '84. I found out that Gorshin was staying at the hotel that was hosting the convention, but not as a guest of said con, he was in town doing Dinner Theater. A woman I knew from school was performing a belly dance routine for the assembled fanboys, and, if that wasn't enough to creep her out, she came running up to me, and said, "JOHN! I JUST MET FRANK GORSHIN!" I said, "Really? Was he nice?" She said, "NO! HE WAS A CREEP! I WAS IN THE ELEVATOR WITH HIM AND HE WAS EYEBALLING ME IN MY COSTUME THE WHOLE TIME!!!" Riddle me this, who wouldn't?

HOWARD MORRIS-This well-rounded showbiz veteran is best known for a TV role he only played a few times. In the handful of episodes he played Ernest T. Bass, the window breakin', yahoo-in', certified whack job on *The*



Andy Griffith Show, Morris left an indelible impression that will be felt for years to come. "He's a NUT!," as Barney Fife, helpless to uphold the law, would frequently exclaim. Ernest T. Bass is undeniably a favorite among *AGS* fans. Morris' comic interpretation of the Hillbilly Anarchist actually evoked sympathy for Ernest, as well as empathy for Andy, Barney, The Darlings, and everyone else who endured his reign of terror. When Andy tries to teach Ernest T. to be civilized and mannered, he learns, real quick, that if it didn't work with Tarzan, it wasn't going to work with a creature as stubborn as Bass. Still, after wrecking a big society bash, he finds a compassionate (and cute) female love interest, someone who digs him BECAUSE he couldn't conform if his life depended on it. THAT, my friends, is the spinoff series that SHOULD have been. Anyway, besides *Griffith*, Morris proved equally adept at cartoon voice-overs. He was the voice of Atom Ant, Beetle Bailey, and, most memorably, Jughead on *The Archie Show* and it's myriad offspring (a box set was recently released). Earlier on, Morris got his start in television with Carl Reiner and Imogene Coca. He also appeared with Jackie Gleason in Woody Allen's *Don't Drink The Water*, and with Doris Day in *With Six, You Get Eggroll*. Morris also directed several TV shows, including the pilot for *Get Smart*. He died, from natural causes, at the age of 85. When I heard the news, I quickly put on "I Love The Sound of Breaking Glass" by Nick Lowe, and reflected (no pun intended). I didn't have a copy of "Eating Goober Peas," though they used to make me sing it in grade school as part of a Civil War medley, similar to "An American Trilogy" (of which Elvis' hit version did *not* include "Eating Goober Peas" a'tall! What were you thinkin', "E"?).

JEREMY "JERRY" RUSSELL-Originally Managed (along with ex-Hell's Angel, "Gut.") the justly legendary Blue Cheer. Russell is credited with having co-founded the original group, which started life as a six piece Blues band. No official recordings are known to have been made before the classic power trio reared their troll-tressed noggins, but the 1967 lineup can be (very briefly) seen, along with a white robed Allen Ginsburg, in a short film called "The Human Be-In." The group also provided the (instrumental) soundtrack to the film. I saw it once, about 20 years ago, but I haven't spoken to anyone else who has. Russell stayed with The Cheer through their glory days, and went on to work in the studio with Sly and The Family Stone, Steve Winwood, Led Zeppelin and The Rolling Stones. Russell died of Myelodysplasia (a/k/a MDS), a bone disease. "Arab," another close associate of the original Blue Cheer lineup, and illustrator of their second LP, "OutsideInside," also passed away recently. The album cover art (which recently turned up on a picture disc) is frequently referred to as a naive homage to Dali, but the imagery of tiny nude bodies engaged in fertility rites seems to also evoke Heironymus Bosch. It's also probably one of the first album covers to feature just the drummer on the front side...at least until "Get Your Ya-Ya's Out!" came out. Either way, it wasn't going to make Frank Frazetta or Roger Dean worry about where their next meal was coming from, and I don't even know if "Arab" ever illustrated another album cover, but as "Rock Art" becomes more noticeable (there is an exhibit of West Coast Psychedelic poster art at the fuckin' LOURVE, fer chrissake), so will "OutsideInside's" cover art (the double gatefold photo display is pretty mind-boggling, and it, too, is available as a reissue on Akarma). .

GORDON SPAETH- Gordon Spaeth was the original saxophone player with the still-active Fleshtones, a band founded nearly 30 years ago, and one that still delivers the goods onstage, and puts the younger Garage wannabees in their place, while maintaining a good relationship with the better bands from their generation and ours. Spaeth played on the group's first three albums, a live LP, several singles and eps, a compilation of side projects and otherwise unreleased Fleshtones tracks, as well as the odd "sideman" gig with his former bandmates, pending his departure (most notably on the excellent "More Than Skin Deep"). His somewhat Jazzy sound was more rooted in 50s and 60s Instrumental Rock and greasy R n' B than the stereotypical New York sax sound, as evidenced by cool instros like "Roman Gods," "Chinese Kitchen" and "Legend of a Wheelman." He never sought to deconstruct Jazz patterns like James Chance or John Lurie for the Punk crowd, but he played Rock n' Roll like he'd been around the block, and that Jazz influence is inescapable (Lee Ving wasn't kidding, if you're gonna survive New York, you'll have to at least tolerate Art, Jazz, and SAXOPHONES, just as newcomers to Chicago are going to have to endure "Stormy Monday" and "Sweet Home Chicago" ad infinitum). I was gone on The 'Tones from the first time I heard "Roman Gods," their debut, in 1981, and I'd have to say much of their recent output is as good or better than their first few albums. I met Spaeth for the first, and only, time in 1984, when the band played at the Twilite Room in Dallas. We hung out for a while before the show, and he explained that he, like the others, came from an Arts background, and he was very friendly,inviting me to call him when I visited New York. As their friends, The Ramones, The Blasters and The Dictators have said all along, this isn't about Punk or Garage or Rockabilly or R n' B or "The Mahivishnu Orchestra plays "Melancholy Baby." It's about The American Sound, and I sure as Hell DON'T wanna hear you put it down.

BIG AL DOWNING-In the last few years, Big Al Downing has been getting more accolades for being an early Black Country singer on the comeback trail than for his Rock n' Roll career, but, I guess it's fair to say that's of more interest to some people.. Like many young Blacks in the south (Contrary to popular belief), Downing grew up to be a great fan of what Little Richard (one of his Rock n' Roll mentors) accurately dubbed "The White man's Blues," Country music, and went on to record a pastiche of Country, R n' B, and Rockabilly. His finest sides include the Black Rock n' Roll classic, "The Georgia Slop," included on one of the earliest (and best) Trash/RockNRoll/Rockabilly/Rn'B/Instrumental Rock comps, *Jukebox at Eric's*. It's got Rock n' Soul vocals, smokin' Blues harp, frantic Country-style pickin', and Downing's piano embellishments (which sound like Fats Domino AND his piano falling down a flight of stairs). It was covered in a rockin', but reverent, "If the motherfucker ain't broke, don't fix it!," style by Barrence Whitfield and The Savages. "Down on the Farm," another favorite among collectors, could have just as easily been called "Muleskinner Rhythm n'' Blues" cos it kicks so much ASS. If you've ever heard those outtakes of Little Richard trying to teach The Upsetters to play "Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On," where he says, "Gotta get that HILLBILLY sound!," I think this is what he was driving at, another happy marriage between wild Rockabilly and screamin' R n' B. Yes, we CAN all just get along. Downing wasn't one to live by limitations. Ray Charles and Charley Pride garnered more fame and acclaim wearing their Country roots on their sleeves, but, I'll betcha Big Al was havin' more fun! Big Al also led perhaps the first all-star C & W and R n' B and me and a chimpanzee showband, backing the fabulous Ms. Wanda Jackson with lead guitarist, Buck Owens. And people get excited about Velvet Revolver. Wanda and Big Al were slated to do a reunion performance together at the Shreveport, Louisiana Rockabilly Festival in September. Downing had been hitting the festival circuit, to favorable reviews, in recent years, and to read any recent interviews, one can see that he was proud, though not braggadocious, about having broken the color bar. He had stated that racism was not a problem, as such, for him, in that even would-be detractors found themselves having too much fun to bring on the hate. Now that he's in the one place where hate can't enter. I'm sure Big Al is showing everybody how to have some REAL fun.

EDDIE ALBERT-Eddie Albert's most spectacular feat might have been in playing generally unspectacular people. He came on as the classic everyman, someone the young and the old could relate to. Immediately likeable and believable, particularly in his most celebrated role, as Oliver Wendell Douglas, the stranger in a strange, strange land on one of the most adventuresome sitcoms of the day. On *Green Acres*, Albert played the straight man to the hilt. His own life, however, had already taken many twists and turns before he became a bonafide celebrity. His first job was as a soda jerk, and, for that alone, he should be buried with honors, but he went on to be a decorated hero in WWII at The Battle of Tarawa (a tiny atoll, or coral island, in the British Gilbert Islands of the West Central Pacific). Albert actually became a hero by going against orders. While told to gather any salvagable military equipment in the aftermath of the battle, Albert instead scoured the island, locating and rescuing all the wounded men he could find (it's a pretty safe bet that they would have been left there to die without Albert's intervention), and was later awarded The Purple Heart. On a lighter note, Albert also worked with a Pop group called Threesome (!) in his pre-film days. His first film was *Brother Rat*, with Ronald Reagan (I won't say it), and, from there, he went on to appear in a diverse array of motion pictures, including *Roman Holiday* (for which he was nominated for an Oscar) with Gregory Peck, *Attack*, with Jack Palance and Lee Majors, *Teahouse of The August Moon*, with Marlon Brando (who plays an Okinawan!!), the celebrated war epic, *The Longest Day*, the original *The Longest Yard* with Burt Reynolds and *The Devil's Rain*, both a celebrated and reviled Occult/Horror turkey with a bizarre array of co-stars including Ernest Borgnine, William Shatner, Ida Lupino, Anton Lavey (!!) and John Travolta (by then, just barely a Sweathog), who utters one line ("Blasphemer!"). You can get it on DVD for about four dollars. He also branched into Television, of course, appearing on shows like *General Hospital*, *Switch*, and, of course, Paul Henning's sur-rural-ist epic, "Green Acres" and it's mutant offspring, *Petticoat Junction*. He even did the voice of *The Lorax*, and, friends, Dr. Seuss was not such a far stretch from Paul

Henning. O.W. Douglas was trying to get back to the country, before the Hippies, only to find he'd blown his mind, anyway. The Hootervillians showed more love for Oliver than he'd have found at a then-ageist Haight-Ashbury, but they had a funny damned way of showing it, which is why the whole push and pull dynamic between the country and the city worked so beautifully. Just like Captain America and Billy in "Easy Rider," Albert's best-loved character was just trying to find the real America, and though it's inhabitants drove him crazy, they didn't shoot him full of holes. As he stated on his 1975 LP, "Eddie Albert Sings & Narrates Americana," "America was struggling to break away and become independent. Independent-that's a big word meaning 'Doing Your Own Thing'." I don't think Peter Fonda could have said it better.

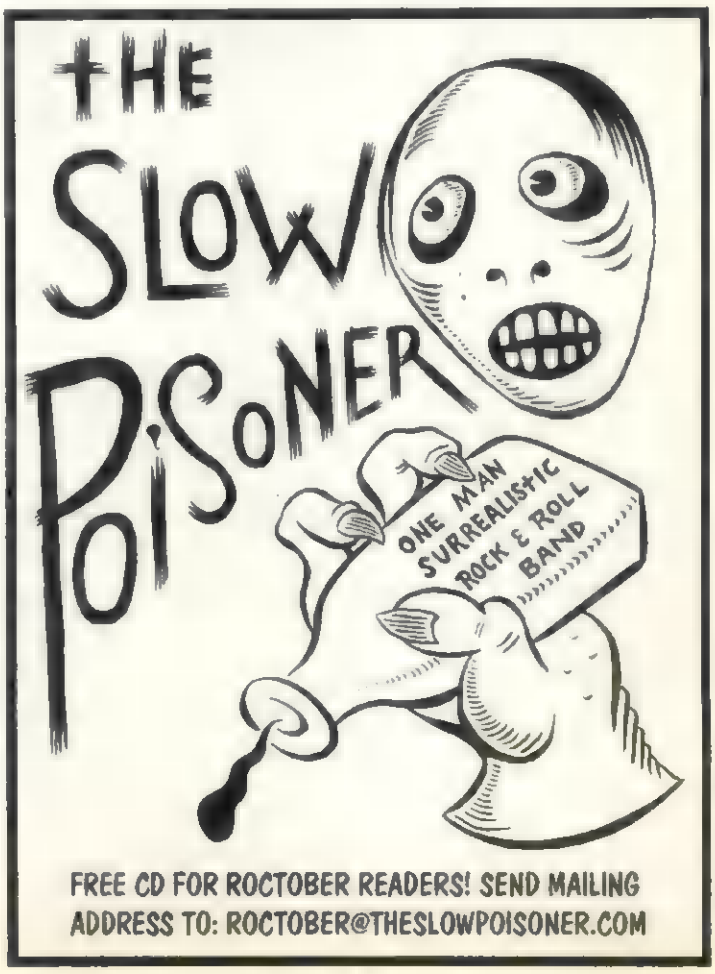
JOHN FRED-John Fred Gourrier got his start in Baton Rouge in 1956, playing what he called "White boys playing Black Soul music before the term "Blue-Eyed Soul" had been invented "(come to think of it, the term "Soul Music" didn't exist, yet, either). His sincere R n' B aspirations put him in good stead, and he found himself recording his first national hit, "Shirley" with Fats Domino's backing band. Fred noted that Fats recorded "Whole Lotta Lovin'" and "Little Coquette" in that same session. From there, he went to New York to promote the record on Alan Freed's radio show. With a spicy N'Orlins flavor, ■ honkin' sax (Lee Allen, perhaps?) and a lovey dovey melody so favored by the teeners, it couldn't lose. At 18 RPM, it would probably sound like early Swamp Pop. English Pop/Rockabilly icon, Shakin' Stevens, also had a hit with the song in 1983. In 1964, Fred recorded a wild version of John Lee Hooker's "Boogie Children" (sic), which sounds for all the world like a very early Rolling Stones demo. Elvis Presley paid John the ultimate compliment by telling him that he'd heard the record ■■ Wolfman Jack's radio show and really dug it (there is ■ devastatingly cool color shot of Elvis and John on Fred's website). Fred's real break, after a slew of killer White Soul sides (Particularly a bone-crushing version of "Harlem Shuffle"), came in 1967-68 when "Judy in Disguise (with Glasses) became the monster hit most artists only dream about. Moderately Psychedelic Pop-Rock with really wigged-out lyrics, which, he copped, were inspired by "Lucy in The Sky With Diamonds" (When the two met in the 80s, Paul McCartney told him Fred he admired his work). "Judy in Disguise..Lemonade pie.. Cantaloupe eyes." I can dig it man. With Fred's high-pitched vocal, a backbeat that wouldn't sound alien on a Soul record, and a very brief "sitar" section, it stands out if and when it turns up on an Oldies radio show. Fred carried on, making good records well into the late 60s, playing crowd pleasin' R n' ■ in and around New Orleans, and eventually producing records on other artists, like Irma Thomas's well-received "Safe With Me." Fred died from complications of kidney failure from a hereditary disease. His website states that a brave friend, who wishes to remain anonymous, donated a kidney in the hopes that he could still have a long, productive life. It wasn't to be, however, as Fred died on the operating table. The legendary early White Soul crossover artist has now crossed over into the spirit world.

Lest We Forget: Mrtin Denny, Paul Winchell, James Doohan, Lyn Collins, Rod Price (Foghat), Oscar Brown, Jr., Chris Curtis (Searchers), Joe Carter (Carter Family), Ray Davis (P-Funk), Long John Baldry, and our buddy Aaron from the Peelers. Also, ■ special mention should be made to our friends John Glick (the Returnables), Michael Dahlquist (Silkworm) and Doug Meis (EXO, the Dials, the Puta Pons, Greenhouse, Cattivo, The Godlins, and more) who unjustly lost their young lives in an auto non-accident. Their joyous music will be truly missed.

I realize I've forgotten a LOT of people this time around. Please don't feel slighted if I neglected to mention one of your favorites. Get Well: Mickey Jones (Man), Soupy Sales, Forrest J. Ackerman, Mike Smith (Dave Clark Five). Obviously, The Stones will be on tour as you read this., though Charlie Watts had been diagnosed with cancer (but is reportedly improving), and, more recently, Ron Wood, now has been diagnosed with emphysema. Wood, now in his 30th year (!) with The Stones, was deemed well enough to tour again. The best news might be just around the corner, as there's also been talk of a Faces reunion. Ike Turner, himself also recently diagnosed with Emphysema, emerged in top form with a blistering set at the recent Rockin' 50s Fest II in Green Bay, Wisconsin. In a literal avalanche of classic talent (Jerry Lee Lewis, Joe Houston, Hank Thompson, Janis Martin, The Comets and The Texas Playboys to name but a FEW), Turner blew the roof off the place with a performance that, in my humble opinion, was as good as the best, and better than the rest. Ike rode out the storm in terrific spirits, with a perpetual smile that I swore was gonna put his jaw into a gridlock, and he sang and played guitar and piano with the same lust for life. It was a great thing to see, as well as to hear. In other good news, R n' ■ giant, and star of John Waters' *Hairspray* and the short-lived sitcom, *Hello, Larry* Ruth Brown, who had to cancel several engagements (including the aforementioned Green Bay Fest and Viva Las Vegas) recently, due to serious health issues, is reportedly passing all the stop signs on the road to recovery, and, we hope, will soon be killin' 'em like she's always done in the past! Treat 'em, mean, Ms. Brown, treat 'em MEAN!

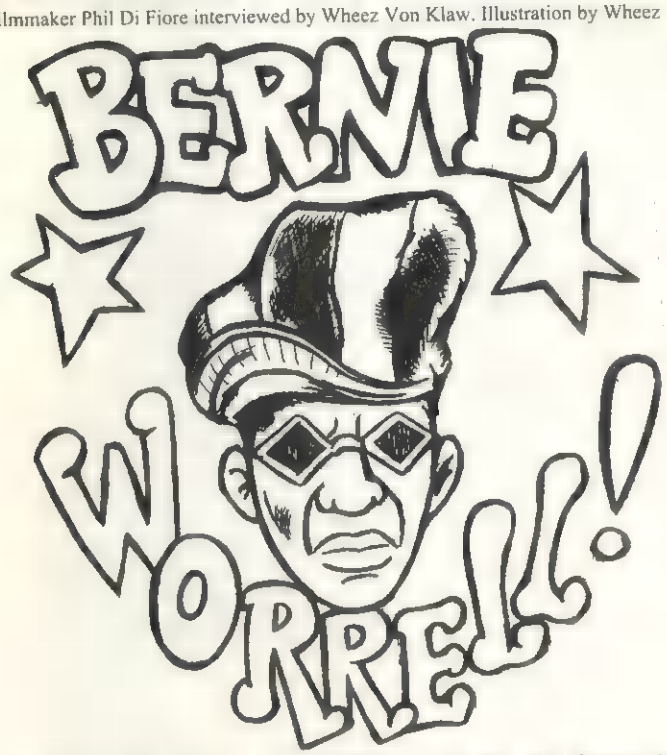
Also: Johnny Thunders' death, written off for years as an open-closed case, was recently reopened. In the last 24 hours of his life, Johnny met up with some shady characters in his new home in New Orleans, got high with them, and returned to his hotel room, where he overdosed on Methadone (legally obtained in Europe). It wasn't shocking that Thunders would eventually succumb to an overdose, and it seemed odd that no foul play was suspected at the time. Why were all of Johnny's fine sharkskin suits, purchased in Thailand, and several thousand dollars in loose bills missing? (whoever the vultures were, they were at least nice enough to leave a mess of German Marks and Japanese Yen behind) The key suspects (if you can even call them that, as only Johnny's friends and fans seem to believe that they, or anyone else, had a hand in his death) are actually interviewed in Lech Kowalski's gripping Thunders documentary, *Born To Lose*. They appear to be totally without remorse, whether their role is exaggerated or not. Mink Deville, Johnny's friend from the old days, and, unknowingly, his next door tenant for the single day that Johnny resided in New Orleans, described Johnny's new "friends" as "Real Gomer and Goober Pyle types" (note: Goober's last name wasn't "Pyle," but you get the picture), adding, "the word on the streets is that they killed Johnny with their bullshit drugs." Whatever went down, it's taken nearly 15 years for this case to be taken seriously. "I ain't one to lend myself to no cause, but, justice, I aim to see served"-Johnny.

On a happier note: Congratulations to our great motorcyclin' friend, Austin Vince for landing a TV show in England, *Roadside U.S.A.* Nice one, mate! And double that congratulations to Mike and Anja from *Ugly Things*, as Austin recently had the opportunity to ride his motorcycle from London to Germany to attend their wedding! As always, one is advised to pick up the new *Ugly Things*, isn't one?



BROTHER FROM ANOTHER PLANET

Filmmaker Phil Di Fiore interviewed by Wheez Von Klaw. Illustration by Wheez



Bernie Worrell may not be a household name, but that may change with the release of Phil Di Fiore's new film ***Stranger: Bernie Worrell on Earth*** *In the film the genius Funkadelic/Talking Heads keyboardist is given his due by various legends from the hip-hop, Funk and punk planets orbiting our solar system. Icons like Dr. Know, David Byrne and Mos Def realize from first hand experience that Bernie Worrell has created and shaped sounds that don't quite seem to come from this planet. No mean feat considerin' the amount of experimental doody-headed "indie" bands that try to be wild and weird and never succeed, while Worrell oozes weird magic with so much force it's staggering. Seeing Worrell's sonic powers unleashed in this documentary makes you realize that this cat very well may be from another world. Certainly he possesses Sun-Ra-like intensity, and like Lou-Lou Reed says, "electricity comes from other planets".*

Wheez: So, when did you first become aware of Bernie? When did you first meet him and become a fan.

Phil Di Fiore: I first met him in high school, I went to school with his son. I didn't know he was a musician at the time, but I knew that he didn't have a 9-5 job and there was something different about him. Then Keith Richard's album *Talk is Cheap* came out and he played on that. And you'd hear that this guy was in the Talking Heads. I wasn't a P-Funk fan, I was a little young in the 70s. But I was a huge Talking Heads fan. Then a little later on Dr. Dre's *The Chronic* came out, which had P-Funk songs lifted and rapped over.

How does Bernie feel about that?

It's a complex thing…he's honored when another artist enjoys his sound and wants to use it for something, but he feels that the original artist should be compensated. Bernie's publishing rights were taken away from him. I'm not going to name names, but Bernie's wife Judy knows a lot about that, but for legal reasons I can't say much. Bernie's name was forged onto a piece of paper that said his life work was signed over to Funkadelic.

Is Bernie still friends with everyone from Funkadelic?

Yes, he grew up with George. They have a fifty-year friend ship, you know they've had their ins and out, but Bernie doesn't hold grudges.

He just probably wants to hang out?

Yeah, Bernie just wants to get together and play music with his friends. If Bernie realizes he may have been taken advantage of, he doesn't care, he just wants to play music. Some people may look at that as an attribute or some may see that as a fault. He just wants to get on with it and play. He is a special guy. But he's definitely got some anger in him, you really see that on stage.

When did you start doing film?

I started making shorts. I had a friend in a band called the X-Models, they were a success in the NY punk/indie scene, and we used to write horror stories together, and that translated into making an interesting film. I never thought I'd be able to pull it off technically. I had to force myself into learning some of the technical aspects of the camera work. But once I did that I fell in love with it.

Did you do that by picking up books or did you have people that have helped you?

I shot a 16mm film in the mid 90s, and kind of learned on the fly. I surrounded myself with people that knew how to, you know, load the film, and an actual editor. I learned everything from that one little short film. I then wanted to go to film school and learn everything the right way. When I was learning about film at the New School, that's when I contacted Bernie again after about ten years.

How did he feel about that?

Well, I talked to his wife initially and she remembered who I was from ten years ago and was the filter, and once she gave it the go-ahead he said 'Do what you want to do, I'm not going to watch it.' Then I started filming everything and filming tours everywhere.

Where did you go on tour?

We went on tour for two weeks from Albuquerque, New Mexico and then drove 14 straight hours to the next gig in Austin, Texas, then slept one hour and went to New Orleans. The bulk of the movie was filmed in New Orleans.

Do you think the movie has raised Bernie's profile?

Well, it's hard to tell because I'm in the center of it. I guess we really have to wait and look back thirty years from now. I didn't make the movie to raise Bernie's profile…

What new music projects is he working on?

Well, I'm trying to help him rekindle old music partnerships. Maybe he will record some new material..

You'd think some of these hip hop bands would get him in the studio and give him some money.

He'll get session work recording with someone for a day or a week. And that's good work, and that's okay for a little while. But he owns no publishing rights so the idea is to build up his catalog, and I think there are going to be three new Bernie albums on the new label.

So, it going to be his own record label?

It's the label I started for him. He's the only artist signed to this label. The whole idea is to get Bernie and his friends together, and I have friends that work in recording studios and everyone is chipping in their time and talents. And we have Prince Paul to produce Bernie's solo album, so that should be cool. He's a huge fan of Bernie's and sampled Bernie in De la Soul. And he just did something with Will Calhoun from Living Color and Bret Bass a young bass player protégé who plays punk/jazz. People will be amazed. Mike Gordon from Phish is playing on a track. There are a lot of surprises. Someone actually needs to finance Bernie so he can just make his art. He needs to be in the studio at anytime with new people and see what happens. Bernie needs to share his gifts, but he's not really willing to jump through hoops to get certain things done.

So, what is the next film project you will be working on?

Well I want to make a fiction story about a songwriter. I want Jeff Tweedy to play the part. I hope to get started in the Fall. *Stranger* has been a success, it's slated for DVD release.

Sometimes Bernie gets compared to Sun Ra, has he played with the Sun-Ra Arkestra.

Yes, musicians compare Bernie to Sun-Ra frequently. No, Bernie hasn't played with them. Bernie really has more in common with people in the punk scene. His personality is that he will not play anything for anyone, he'll play whatever he wants. When people see the movie they'll realize that his music really speaks for him, completely takes him over. Watching Bernie play will be as close as you can get to knowing him.

SEE MORE AT WWW.STRANGERMOVIE.COM

UPDATES

MONKEY UPDATES

MORE MONKEY BANDS: Arctic Monkeys, DJ Monkey, Hammersmith Gorillas (a/k/a The Gorillas) **Rock N Roll Monkey & the Robots**
MORE MONKEY SONGS: "8 Armed Monkey" - KTU
ROBOT UPDATES
MORE ROBOT BANDS: Rock N Roll Monkey & the Robots
MORE ROBOT SONGS: "Mechanical Girl" – Danger Men, **"Robot Man"** – The Epoxies

ONE MAN BAND UPDATES

GHOST WRITER - The Texan one man band uses foot percussion, hollow-body guitar, and harmonica in the tradition of the great blues buskers, but he also draws from psychobilly.

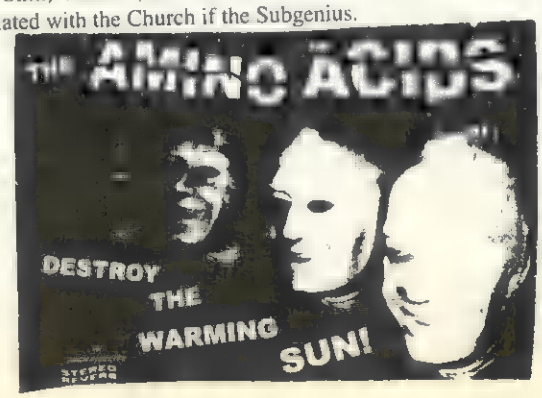
NIKO ONE MAN BAND (N.O.M.B.) – Denmark based 1MB (a/k/a the Rockabilly Gasmask, because he sometimes wears a gasmask with a microphone mounted in it). He plays his blues/rockabilly on two homemade three string guitars mad eof a winebox and a Clementine box, tuned to open E and played with a slide. His dumkit is pedal-layed bass, snare, gighhat and tambourine.

SHOEHORN –Rhythmic tap dancing percussionist saxophonist who invented the Tappercussion™ Mark VII e-tap™ instrument that allows him to paly three parts without a sequencer. One of his signature bits involves bongos and other percussion creating a "one man drum circle." Check out www.shoehornmusic.com

TOOTHLESS GEORGE ONE MAN BAND - Philly based drum/guitar/harmonica 1MB based on the Hasil ethos.

MASKED BAND UPDATE

AMINO ACIDS – Space age surf music performed in POS (Protective Outer Skin) masks (a/k/a/smiley Halloween masks and white pantyhose. Associated with the Church if the Subgenius.



CANTANKEROUS – Crazy masked and Celtic gear-wearing political dance act signed to Tommy Boy

CHEVREUIL – French post rockers that are masked on their CD cover

COQ ROQ - This chicken masked extreme band is in a series of Burger King commercials for something called "chicken fries," which is already funny, but what really rules is how awesome they are. If you go to their website (www.coqroq.com) you can download their songs, but also read all about this corporate fictional band that is posited (with corporate tongue in cheek) to be a fiercely independent chicken rock act (especially the dreadlocked Free Range who almost quit when they hooked up with Burger King). They only agreed to be co-opted so they could "stick it to the man" by "taking the man's money," and ostensibly to reach more people with their message (that chicken fries are awesome). They are pretty raunchy (one song is called "Nice Box," and one web photo of them with groupies said "Ladies love the Coq" until Burger King changed it). Slipknot has threated suit because they feel the band looks too much like them, but they don't really, and what makes Coq Roq better than Slipknot is that they play a punk-metal-barrock hybrid without slow whiny parts. And they dress like chickens.

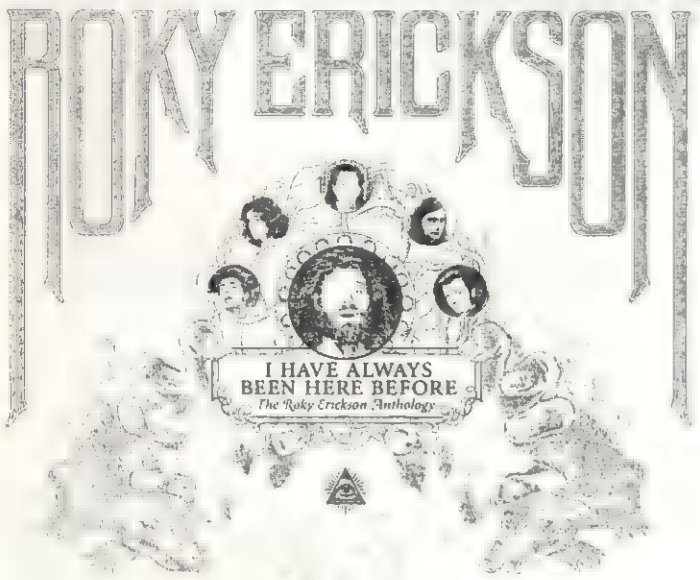
THE INSURGENTS– Washington State rock 'n' roll performance artists/social experimenters who ride motorcycles, wear leather jackets, use electric guitars, portable amps, wear plastic Halloween masks (a *Scream* mask and a skeleton) and spend hours playing loud feedback jams at local pubs and on busy streets annoying barhoppers.

K & ■ MIME – Gospel mime twins with the best flash intro to their website ever. Check out kkmime.org

ROCKABILLY GASMASK – See Niko One Man Band

I LOVE ROKY ROLL

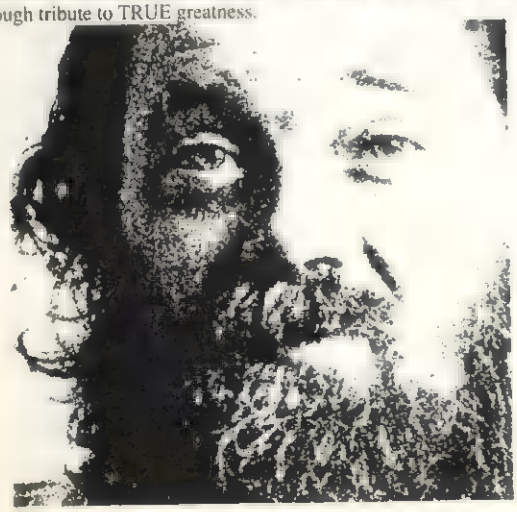
ROKY ERICKSON REVIEW by GENTLEMAN JOHN BATTLES



Roky Erickson "I Have Always Been Here Before" (Shout Factory! 2042A Armacost Ave. Los Angeles, CA 90025) Though it seems like every week brings another 13th Floor Elevators re-release (usually with subpar artwork, dicey track placement, liners that would suggest you're getting unreleased material when you're not, and so forth. "Sorry, Charly"), and some very good Roky solo collections are now making the rounds (legal ones, mind you. Look for the name, "TrustRoky", on all future Roky releases. It means that Roky is being paid, and the fans are getting the best quality material possible), a comprehensive, career-spanning Roky retrospective seemed, at best, a legal and logistical impossibility. In recent years, however, with the help of his brother, and all his loving friends and fans, Roky has proven that the impossible can be done. More on that later, but, Shout Factory!, who've been putting out some great reissues in the last few years, rose to the task with a collection of Roky's best moments, before, after, and with The Elevators. All of Roky's best moments would fill more than two CDs, easily, but there's more than enough here to satisfy both the curious newcomer in search of a "primer", and the collector/fan/geek (that would be me) who's been around the block. This set could have just as easily been called "Right Track Now" (though Roky didn't write that song, it does appear here) or "I Can't Be Brought Down" (which doesn't appear here, but you can get it on the Pink Dust reissue of "Don't Slander Me,"which has TrustRoky's approval, and mine), as both song titles are reflective of Roky's remarkable resurgence. He is now in a place where he can truly dig this for what it is, a testament to his genius, and the love that truly surrounds him. It's packaged beautifully, with incredible photos from every facet of his career. If your jaw doesn't drop over these full color shots of Roky with The Aliens AND The Elevators, you should audition for John Cusack's stunt-double. Bill Bentley, who compiled the Roky Erickson tribute album and played in a later Velvet Undergound lineup, wrote the detailed, informative and heartfelt liner notes in appreciation to his longtime friend, Roky. You could spend a few hours with the booklet, but let's get to the music ("And there was a loud "Hosannah."."). This Mad Monster Party kicks off with the raw, screamin' Teen-Punk of The Spades, Roky's first group. "We Sell Soul" (later reworked by The Elevators as "Don't Fall Down") was the B-side of the original "You're Gonna Miss Me" (which would have also been a welcome addition to this set, alongside the admittedly superior hit version, which, of course, is included). To the tune of droning, mournful, monk -chants, the teenage Avatar unleashes demons of fire and the vengeance of Shiva, on LBJ country and the world at large. Nothing can change the shape of things to come. Roky arrived on the scene in 1965, like a much handsomer, though far more deranged, Swedish-American take on "Mystic Eyes"-era Van Morrisson. A White screamer par excellence, learning his craft from Little Richard, James Brown, and late night Horror movies. He was a man with a plan, even if it would take the members of an unrecorded competing group, The Lingsmen, to procure him for the band that would change his fate, and that of Rock n' ' Roll music, forever. The Spades had their moment, propelled by a savage shot of Rhythm n' Blues, with just a little bit of Soul on the side, just for good measure, but, it would have probably ended within a year, anyway. It was plain to see that Roky was the star, and needed a band befitting of his talent. I probably don't even need to tell you what happened next, but, just in case, The Thirteenth Floor Elevators burst upon the scene, very much aware of their role as the first true Psychedelic band (some say The Dead, some say The Charlatans, I say bollocks), not only scoring a hit the first time out (tho' "Miss Me" was released on various labels, it was International Artists that broke it nationally. New to the business, I.A. would not repeat this success until The Bubble Puppy arrived, two years later), but combining psychedelic drugs, philosophy, religion (Eastern AND Western), sex and scientific theory in a way that no one had touched upon, particularly not in a Texas that wasn't even ready for long hair, much less the idea that man could restructure his very thinking! But, from a purely musical point of view, "You're Gonna Miss Me" is an unparalleled masterpiece. It has everything that a great Rock n' Roll song should have, and even some things that no Rock n' Roll song EVER had. It's a rough damned act to follow, but various tracks from the group's first two, excellent, LPs are up to the task (the Elevators only made one bad LP, a phony "Live" album, done without their consent, whose original tracks later proved to be very good, minus the phony crowd noise). Though their debut LP, "The Psychedelic Sounds of The Thirteenth Floor Elevators", is one of the most important albums of it's time (if not THE most important), the pure Punk energy of their one hit arguably only rises to the surface again on "Fire Engine" and "Tried to Hide." The former is, ostensibly, about riding a fire engine for the thrill of it, as opposed to doing battle with a devastating fire. The popular interpretation is that the song is about doing the hallucinogen D.M.T., as the words, "The empty place" are pronounced as "D-M-T place." In any case, it's a great song, displaying the group at the peak of their powers. "Tried To Hide" has an arguably deeper meaning, as Stephanie Chernikowski, a friend of the band, pointed out in *Not Fade Away* # 1 (Fall of '75, surely the first-ever 'zine to devote an entire issue to Roky and The Elevators). The song, which is set to basically the same riff as The Kinks' "Come on Now" (and would, in turn, get a spiffy overhaul by Texas Garage Punks, The Bad Seeds, as "All Night Long"), is about a real incident in which Roky returned from a gig to find a strange woman in his bed, and sent her packing. Groupies were not part of the Elevators' scene, though some say Roky had sexual charisma comparable to Elvis in his prime. To The Elevators, sex was something sacred, part of the whole quest to "Find God", which was the primary reason that, early on, a lot of people began using LSD (which was still legal when The Elevators formed), though, later on, as Dennis Hopper put it, " One day, we found out that God had split." There was more to it, for the moment, than "Let's get ripped," and the same was true of sex. "Kicks" were not the primary incentive for people in The Elevators' circle, and this was the message they were trying to put across. It was, of course, electric jug player and lyricist, Tommy Hall, who introduced hallucinogens in a religious context (patterning his approach on the Native Americans of The Southwest) and the idea of a spiritual sexuality, influenced by the teachings of Eastern religion, something explored much further on their second LP, "Easter Everywhere", which was built around the idea that there were other ways, besides drugs, to reach a new Mecca (which DIDN'T turn out to be San Francisco, thank you).Hall and Erickson wrote the bulk of the material together, with Roky showing great maturity as a singer, doing less screaming than on the band's debut, but with a remarkably evolved sense of phrasing. At the time Tommy Hall pointed out that there were too many songs putting women down, even if "Tried To Hide" was a justifiable put-down, but, jeez, it WAS 1966, ferchrissakes! "You're Gonna Miss Me" itself was a gurl put-down of the highest order, but it didn't single out women as a whole. The Elevators would follow their stunning debut with an equally impressive sophomore effort, featuring "She Lives (In a Time of Her Own)", glorifying, not putting down, a woman who embodies all the essential elements of "The Quest", while "Slip Inside This House" eludes to different levels on the spiritual plane, and the care it takes to reach each one (the back cover depicts a young Buddhist monk who, in deep meditation, Hall said, had left his body and traveled freely by reaching the highest plane, or "House", in his mind). It showed the group advocating meditation as a potentially more effective (and cheaper) way to get high. Still, it could be argued that the song is about drugs, though in a controlled situation. The members of The Elevators, however, were losing control at this point, frequently being harassed by local authorities, which accelerated the paranoia brought on by, reportedly, daily LSD trips, and, in time, much harder drugs. Still, their work at this time was remarkable, and holds up today. The Elevators were falling apart by late 1967 (within a year, Roky would end up being institutionalized, while lead guitarist, the late Stacey Sutherland, would land in jail, both for possession of marijuana), but they still had one fine album left in them, "Bull of The Woods" (which isn't represented in this collection, probably because Roky's contributions were fewer, or that the album was not entirely completed by the time Roky and Stacey were incarcerated. Get to know this album, anyway. It's time well spent). Around this time, Roky also recorded some lovely acoustic duets with Tommy Hall's wife, Clementine. Among these were the outstanding "Right Track Now", a then-unreleased ballad written by Powell St. John, later with Mother Earth, and "I Had To Tell You" (featured on "Easter Everywhere."), which was co -written by Clementine Hall, who'd earlier co-written "Splash One" (recorded later as a duet with Roky, which isn't included here) , one of the most beautiful Rock songs of it's time, comparable to "At The Crossroads" by The Elevators' soul-buddies, The Sir Douglas Quintet. Speaking of whom, it was Doug Sahm who instigated the first serious comeback attempt for Roky in 1975 Roky had done little musically between the time that he briefly led a revamped Elevators line-up in '72 -"73 (with original drummer, John Ike Walton, mk 2 bassist, Ronnie Leatherman, and Roky's Brother, Donnie, on guitar. Stacey Sutherland was out of jail, and keen to rejoin the group, but a heroin habit made him a bad risk) and the time that

Roky and Doug began sharing stages together (as they had in the 60s in Texas and in San Francisco). Eventually, these two giants of Texas music made a record together. The now-extremely rare Mars Records 45 of "Red Temple Prayer (Two Headed Dog)" and "Starry Eyes" (recorded as Roky Erickson and Bleib Alien, his first real post-Elevators backing group, that is, when Sahm's own group wasn't doing the honors) appears here, in it's entirety, for the first time ever, ■ a legal reissue, though Time/Life actually released the "A" side on a Punk/New Wave compilation, and it fit in very comfortably with The Cramps and Pere Ubu, I must say. Roky's website inquired as to whether the record had ever been booted. IT HAS! I heard it, and it sounded like SHIT! Now, this record doesn't have the best reputation, being ■ it was recorded in a hurry under very primitive conditions Yes, Sahm could have done better (he produced and played guitar on it, adding some beautiful Country leads on "Starry Eyes" and even some heavy power riffs on "Two Headed Dog."), but neither he nor Roky were Ross Perot's trust fund kiddies at the time. In hindsight, though, this could be considered a very early D.I.Y./ Punk record. Fans of the lo-fi movement should be impressed to find out that you CAN make ■ record that doesn't sound like shit on ■ miniscule budget. The Ramones did it, and, for that matter, so did The Thirteenth Floor Elevators. This is where the fun begins. Roky's "Horror Rock" sound, as well as his paeans to Buddy Holly, were now coming into place. Many people have suggested that Roky turned to monster movies to escape the real-life horrors of the institution (it was called Rusk, and may all the world forget it ever stood), and even those brought on by his gradual (and extremely unfortunate) return to the drug scene. Roky's first wife, Dana, pointed out that "friends" were turning him on to more than just weed at the time. Roky went on to be diagnosed with schizophrenia, though it's been argued that the drugs he was force-fed at Rusk, along with an ongoing series of shock treatments, had as much, or more, to do with his mental and emotional decline as the street drugs he'd taken in The 60s and early 70s (for the record, Roky has been clean for many years) This was not a happy time for Roky, to be sure, but horror movies were not the problem. They may well have been a big part of the solution. Roky, a fan of the genre from childhood, turned to films such as the outstanding British Occult shocker, "Curse of The Demon", and the great "B" Sci-Fi thriller, "Creature With The Atom Brain" (still his two favorite Horror films today), and came up with ■ new sound, which Rolling Stone aptly described as "MC5 Laser- Metal," resplendent with the imagery of vampires, demons, zombies, gremlins, ghosts, and Old Scratch, himself. It was as though Edgar Allen Poe had risen from the dead, just to rewrite Roger Corman's adaptations of his best-known works. Scary stuff it is, resulting from Roky's deep absorption of Monster movies, but still done in the spirit of fun. Fortunately, he also found yet another band worthy of his talents in the San Francisco-based Aliens, which featured Bill Miller a.k.a. Billy Angel, from Bleib Alien, on the electric autoharp (no Rock band, not even The Electric Prunes, used the instrument to such dramatic effect) and Duane "Bird" Aslaksen, one of the most criminally overlooked Damaged Guitar Gods of the past 30 years, on lead guitar. Their first single, "Bermuda" b/w "The Interpreter" was released jointly on Rhino in The U.S. and Virgin in The U.K. Thankfully, both sides appear here. "Bermuda" may be Roky's most Elevatorsesque (is that a word?) solo recording, with an impossibly low tuned monster fuzztone guitar riff and an incredible similation of Tommy Hall's jug sound of old (an effect created, we're told, by Bill Miller's autoharp). Roky and his new boys, who were, by all accounts, just as eccentric, were taking no prisoners. "Bermuda", of course, is about the mystery of The Devil's Triangle (then a hot topic), but it goes ■ to explain that, yes, The Devil himself was responsible for the strange disappearances going on in that region (well, if you want to believe that story, you can). Roky's outstanding vocals, replete with demonic warbling and lycanthropic screams, are complemented beautifully by Aslaksen's fiery "Chinese Alien Guitar." "The Interpreter" seems to suggest that The Devil was pulling strings in Moscow, too. More significantly, it also appears to be fortell the end of The Cold War., and, possibly, even Communism itself. It's a bit less hard-rockin' than "Bermuda", but features even more strange chord progressions and Martian Country leads from Aslaksen (longtime Roky associate, Gregg Turner, once compared this sound to The Allman Bros! Well, if Dickie Betts had starred in "Invasion of The Saucermen" I might back that theory). In 1980, Roky and The Aliens' new material was released on two different LPs in The U.S. and Great Britain (each album had a different track selection, but still contained some of the same songs). This collection contains a healthy selection from the CBS UK release (Roky's only major label outing...YET) and the San Fran Punk/New Wave label, 415's, U.S. counterpart. It was suggested that Blue Oyster Cult/Dictators/Clash producer, Sandy Pearlman, might be doing the honors for these sessions, but, as it happened, former CCR bassist, Stu Cook, ended up taking the reins instead (yes, I know Stu Cook is in another band called CCR, now), and he did a magnificent job, somehow honing Roky's sound to where it made sense in the studio, but didn't sound neutered. Among the many highlights are "Bloody Hammer", which had enough Punk stomp to please the spiky hairs (Roky was becoming quite the cult figure on the Punk circuit, and Dallas Punk legends, The Nervebreakers, backed him up twice), with Roky playing the part of a real-life Crypt Keeper, dishing out terror tales of demons, mad doctors, a baby ghost, and the allusion that "All bats are as Dracula, vampires", while ■ madman pounds out the beat on some victim's skull on the attic floor. Roky is quick to point out that he is not referring to himself in the first person: "I never hammered my mind out, I never had that bloody hammer." The song is also, as far as I can tell, a loving tribute to Hammer Films. "It's a Cold Night For Alligators" is almost a literal transcription of the 50s Trash-Horror film, "The Alligator People", (starring Lon Chaney, Jr. as "The hook-hand, hate-maddened Cajun!"), and, as I pointed out earlier, "Creature With The Atom Brain" gives the atomic zombie classic the same treatment, with Roky reenacting the most powerful scene in the movie as a zombie (with voice-speed alteration), the victim, and the doctor. One of Horror-Rock's finest moments. "Don't Shake Me Lucifer" is a great rocker that'd stand ■ it's own without horrific lyrics, but, that, it does indeed have. In this case, Roky, as the protagonist, tells Lucifer he can shake the world and everyone in it, but he will not be shaken. Though I don't believe in Lucifer, myself, real forces of evil have tried to bring Roky down, but the resurgence, nay, renaissance, in his personal and artistic life, will stick. "The Wind and More" contains some of Roky's most masterful vocalizing ever, extracting the most syllables in the shortest time possible, putting Hardcore kiddies to shame. "I Think Up Demons" (previously, and erroneously, known as "I Think of Demons") and "White Faces" read like Valentines. That is, if Valentine's Day fell on October 31 (hey, every day could be Halloween, if you'd only believe). This was a musically prolific period, and The Aliens, like so many Renfields, served their Lord, Count Dracula (that would be Roky) well. Roky's other main backing band (he was alternating from Austin to San Francisco at this time), the decidedly more bare-boned Explosives, do not appear on this collection, and never actually went into the studio with Roky, but I've been told that a CD of their best live recordings together is in the works. Buy that, too. Besides the better known U.S./U.K. release, there are three tracks from the sickeningly rare 1977 French EP (I've only seen it once, and it was a case of "If you've got to ask, you can't afford it.") that was re-released on New Rose (with painfully bad surface noise. Yes, it was a "Lo-Fi" recording to start with, but the improvement over New Rose's version, is drastic, to say the least). The CD title track, "I Have Always Been Here Before" speaks of past lives, deja vu, and that old standby, Satan, but still stays directed ■ his lady love. It' s not quite as "crisp" ■ the version on 1986's "Gremlins Have Pictures" (also re-released on Pink Dust CD recently, with the TrustRoky seal, and my recommendation), but, I think I like this version better, now that I don't have to listen to that crappy earlier reissue. "Mine, Mine,Mind" and "Click Your Fingers Applauding The Play " were later recut with Stu Cook, but, it's interesting to hear these songs in their earlier, more primitive stages, again, without the annoying surface noise. Roky's "Folk" side also rears it's head on several tracks, here. Like Leadbelly before him, Roky can make as much noise as a Panzer Tank on ■ acoustic guitar, should the mood strike him, but these selections represent the "softer" side of his 70s-80s career. Still, if you have kids in the Scouts right about now, rest assured, this is not the kind of stuff you'll hear around the campfire (that is, of course, unless you intervene). "Song To Abe Lincoln", however, honors it's subject matter with real devotion and reverence in such a way that it should be used on The History Channel (even tho' The Cartoon Network is Roky's fave). It was recorded live with Bleib Alien in 1975 Kerrville, Texas, the Folk center of The Southwest, was The Elevators' second home (I think John Ike still lives there), so, it's not surprising that Roky would occasionally direct his energies toward a less rockin', tho' just as hypnotic, approach to his unique (to say the least) musical vision. "Anthem (I Promise)" is another song of devotion, though it alludes to God, The Devil, and earthly love in one fell swoop, with the remarkable sense of lyricism that is Erickson's stock in trade. "Warning (Social and Social-Political Injustices)" puts the "Brainwashers, the propaganda starters who slander peace and liberty" in their place in a Guthrie-Dylanesque manner. In the 80s, Roky would go on to front The Evil Hook Wildlife E.T. and the less imaginatively monikered Roky Erickson Band (comprised of longtime Doug Sahm bandmates Speedy Sparks, John "Johnny X." Reed, Harry Hess and Ernie Durawa. Apparently, Junior Brown was also in this group for at least one gig, but, I'm not sure.). Both groups would release product, though not until their respective breakups, with the exception of the single, "Don't Slander Me." released in 1984 on Speedy Sparks' own Dynamic label, and not the version from the LP/CD of the same name (though that version's uno monstruo!) "Don't Slander Me " is Roky's most Punk Rock offering since "You're Gonna Miss Me", a put-down against the put-downs rendered by the enemies of Truth, Justice, and The American Way (and I can say that with a straight face), with some choice Horror/Sci-Fi imagery thrown in, for good measure. It's easily the "Pushin' Too Hard" of The 80s (Sky Saxon even covered it, himself!), even though Roky had been performing it live since at least the late 70s. It also contains some hot Texas twang by John Reed (not credited here, though his later contributions are). The other two songs included here from those sessions, "Clear Night For Love " and "You Don't Love Me Yet" are decidedly more sweet, containing more lovin' pheromones than a 16 oz. Hershey bar. In a better world, either or both songs could have charted. The Evil Hook Wildlife E.T. released two fine 12"ers (and a CD on Sympathy in The 90s) which included a muddy live recording of The Velvets' "Heroin," more hard-rockin' takes on the two previously mentioned tunes, and, arguably, their best moment, included here, "The Beast." Roky screams eerily of The Apocalypse That Will Not Be Televised to a flourescent, sustain-driven Blues guitar excursion that sounds like a cross between The Yardbirds' "Steeled Blues" and Randy Holden/Blue Cheer's "Fruit and Iceburgs." The excellent "Don't Slander Me" album, on which Roky is very ably assisted by the likes of Duane Aslaksen, Jack Casady (Jefferson Airplane, Hot Tuna, S.V.T), Jack Johnson (not HIM. This cat played in the later Flamin'Groovies, making him less wealthy, but way cooler) and Paul Zahl (S.V.T., later Flamin' Groovies), is only represented by two tracks, but, as I pointed out earlier, the "Don't Slander Me" reissue should be available at all fine stores where you'd also find this. If you're new to Roky's music, you WILL want more, trust me. "Nothing In Return" is a good mid-tempo Holly-esque rocker, not

my favorite from that set (though I sure don't dislike ANY of it), but it fits in nicely alongside "Burn The Flames", a song that, had it been available in the late 60s, my brothers and I would have played [redacted] the basement, with the lights off, right behind Arthur Brown's "Fire". Appropriately, this song was used, to great effect, on the *Return of The Living Dead* soundtrack, alongside longtime fans The Cramps (who even covered "Two Headed Dog" while cutting their fangs), The Damned (also, surely , great fans) and The Flesheaters (Chris D. being one of the few White devil screamers fit to stand beside Roky at the throne. Bon Scott? Fuhgeddaboutit). From there, we go to Roky's most recent sessions (and as good as things [redacted] going now, they may not be "most recent" for long!), which eventually turned up on the 1995 Trance Syndicate (Butthole Surfers/Hugh Beaumont Experience drummer King Vitamin's label) release, "All That May Do My Rhyme." After cooling his heels a bit, following a series of rare live shows (I saw one of them. You talk about "Shock and Awe!"), Roky expressed [redacted] interest in recording, after it was found that out he owned the publishing on a mere handful of his own compositions. He's been screwed out of the rights to his songs (still is!), not unlike the Blues and early Rock n' Roll artists he admired. The results of these sessions found our boy in beautiful voice, with the sympathetic backing of John Reed, Speedy Sparks, Paul Leary (Butthole Surfers' guitarist), Roky's brother, Sumner (former tuba player for the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, under Andre Previn's direction), Charlie Sexton, and a host of others. The half-dozen new songs that turned up on this album (which also included the '85 Roky Erickson Band recordings, in better sounding, longer or alternate versions than the ones released on New Rose, plus "We Sell Soul" as a bonus track), and the splendid acoustic and electric interplay and semi-classical embellishments contained therein give these tracks a quieter, though fuller sound, making it less like Roky's "Sgt. Pepper" and more like his "Forever Changes." The four songs contained here, of which "We Are Never Talking", released as [redacted] single, is a standout, find an Erickson more comfortable in the skin he's in. Not screamin' at demons or pushing sonic boundaries, but singing for the joy of it. Roky's condition, unfortunately, had started to deteriorate around this time. He not only showed [redacted] interest in music, but he was becoming more and more reclusive, seldom leaving the miserable government-subsidized housing unit, in Del Valle, Texas, that he lived in, amidst a barrage of TVs, radios, stereos and police transmitters all going at once (ostensibly to drown out the voices [redacted] his head). Many people even feared for Roky's life. He'd been on meds years earlier, but, his mother, then his legal guardian, decided that he didn't need them, nor did he necessarily need to have his critically abscessed teeth (which were on the verge of going toxic, which, potentially, would have killed him). Sumner eventually stepped in and became his brother's legal guardian, and got him into an outpatient psychiatric program. Roky responded favorably to treatment almost overnight. His teeth were also replaced, thanks to an extremely generous move by Henry Rollins, publisher of the excellent Openers II, a book of all Roky's known lyrics and poems (many others have since surfaced, however), who paid for the whole thing. It's cool that members of Metallica and Pearl Jam were doing odd jobs for Johnny Ramone before he was even sick, but Rollins put his money where Roky's mouth is, as it were. Thank you, Henry. Roky's response to therapy and medication has been truly unprecedented (we're talking about medication developed in the 35-plus years since Roky's Drug Hell at Rusk), he now wants to get well as much as the rest of us want him to. Mutual friends tell me he's getting better all the time, and The Austin Chronicle ran a cover shot of Roky looking so happy and so handsome that I know I'm not the only one who cried. A triumphant return to the stage has found Erickson, once more, truly happy to be back where he belongs, and it's just the beginning. Roky is about to perform at the very prestigious Austin City Limits Festival, and, while the offers must be pouring in, who knows what the future holds in store? Many, very good, things, I'm sure, and, [redacted] we come full circle, this set will prove to be essential on just one listen. If I've said a couple of hundred mouthfuls, one listen to this collection should convince even the most hardened skeptic that Roky Erickson's work is worth 10,000 words, and, besides, as Antiseen put it (in their own Roky tribute 45.), you can't pay enough tribute to TRUE greatness.



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WERK IT BABY! *KRAFTWERK* LIVE IN NEW YORK AT HAMMERSTEIN BALLROOM - JUNE 1, 2005

By Madeline Bocaro

Kraftwerk play live in New York with the frequency of a comet – approximately every seven years, and each performance is ■ rare treat! The original Man Machines took the stage, first in silouhette behind the curtain, then fully revealed in their suave matching gray business suits. They were dressed for work, the Hammerstein Ballroom was transformed into their office / laboratory and it was business as usual. There is no 'cute one' nor 'witty one' in this group! Each uniformed man stood rigidly, masking his humanity behind his own laptop computer, a far cry from when the band would transport their entire studio from Dusseldorf. Next time around, their entire presentation will probably be contained in a device the size of an iPod Shuffle!

A huge super-wide cinemascopic screen presented illustrious retro and futuristic films portraying each song's theme. During the 'motion' set, we went winding through the French mountains with thousands of cyclists during 'Tour de France'. Endlesss roads, German cars and road signs appeared during 'Autobahn' with more cool travel scenery based on the memorable yellow and blue album cover art. The cling - clanging of 'Trans Europe Express' took us chugging across the tracks of Europe - metal on metal. Kraftwerk's live sound is much edgier and even funkier than on the records, which made us all really want to rock out!

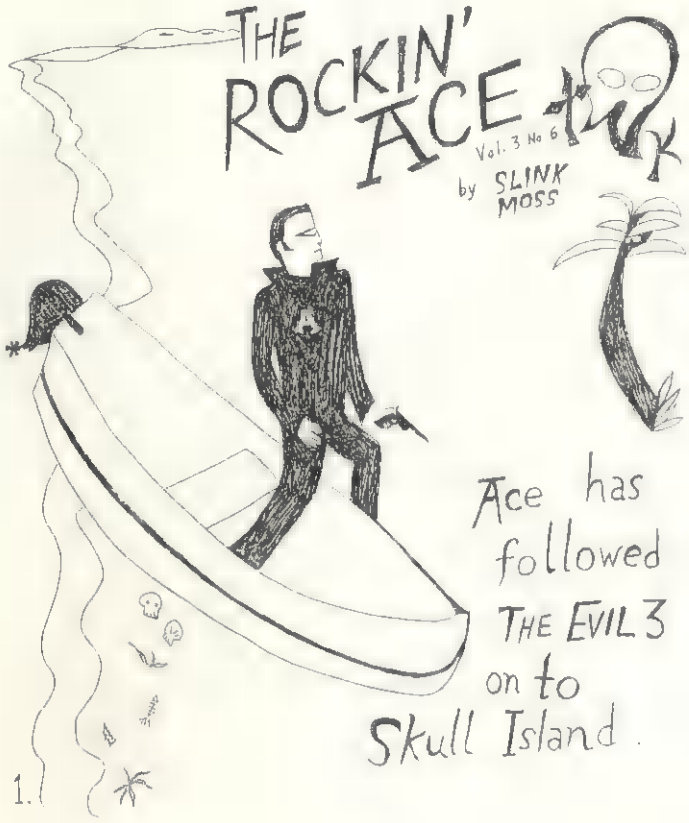
After awhile you wonder what the guys are actually doing behind those computers. There is no need for any of them to sing, and all of the music is pre-programmed. Aren't they bored up there? They seem to be concentrating very seriously on something – oh - they must be trying to out-bid each other for vintage tin toy robots on eBay! One or more of them could easily have taken a bathroom break without a pause in the proceedings, but who cares! Kraftwerk is a well oiled machine!

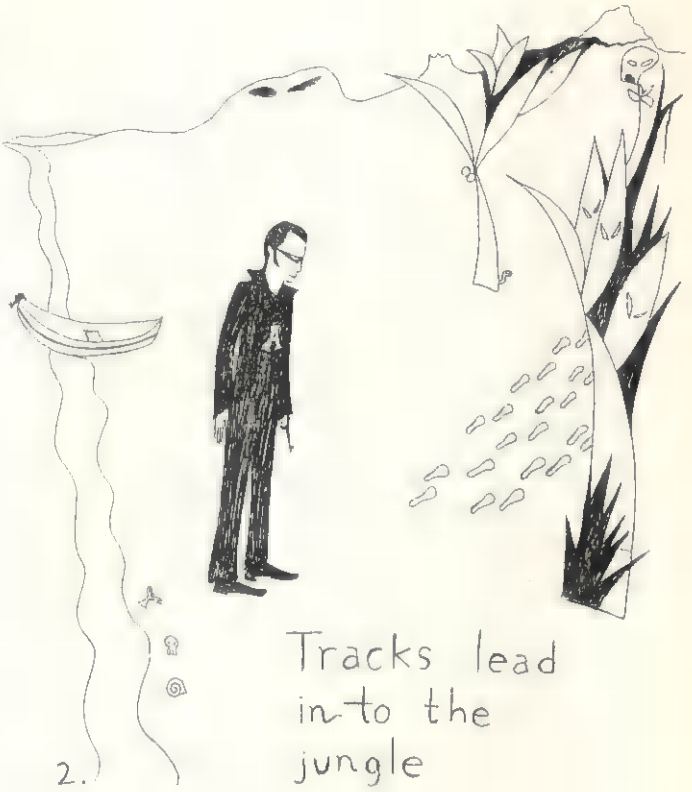
The hauntingly beautiful 'Radioactivity' with its clicking Geiger counter causes one to forget that Radioactivity is a harmful thing. The twinkling, tinkling 'Neon Lights' was mesmerizing as usual, as was 'The Model' with weird scenes of 1950's high fashion.

For the encore, the K-men return in their black and lime-green neon tubed Spiderman leotards, which outline their unearthly skeletal structures. So, they are not human after all! They perform 'Elektro Kardiogramm' with lyrics, dizzying cardiorhythmic waves and charts flashing across the screen in yellow and black. (I guess 'Colonoscopy' wouldn't have been such a glamourous song title). During 'Vitamin' various colourful pills and capsules float and dissolve on-screen, as the names of various nutritional supplements are uttered in monotone amidst more blips and bleeps.

That's what I love about this band. There is absolutely no social commentary on the subject matter. It is just an idea or a single word presented in a controlled, formulated repetative manner, never breaking form, without any political agenda nor questions asked. 'I'm the operator of my pocket calculator - blip bop'. 'We are the robots...blip blip beep beep earrrrwwwwaaaahhh!' They could easily do a duet on 'Numbers' with the Muppets on Sesame Street, teaching kids to count to four in several languages! On second thought, when I played Kraftwerk tapes in the 70's at my job in a department store, a customer complained that the weird music was scaring her baby!

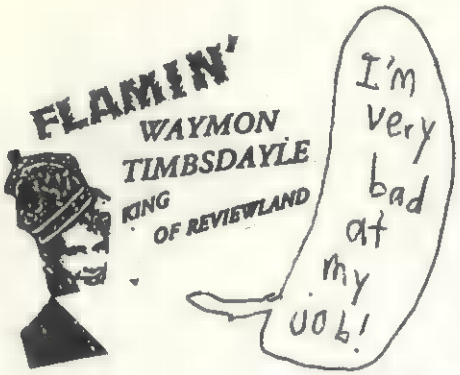
The actual K-werk robots took the stage for 'The Robots' of course, and did some synchronized arm movements. (Imagine passing through airport customs with your own robot replica!) After two full hours (they're always werking overtime) 'Boing Boom Tschak' and 'Musique Non-Stop' brought the house down, and our heads throbbed all the way home!


THE ROCKIN' ACE
Vol. 3 No 6
by SLINK MOSS
Ace has followed THE EVIL 3 on to Skull Island.
1.


Tracks lead in-to the jungle
2.

What am I doing here?
3.

A trap!
NEXT:
THE EVIL 3
cannibals?
4.



Against Me! "Searching For A Former Clarity" (Fat) This very progressive, dense punk album brings to mind some of the more ambitious Clash stuff without the Clash-magic. But who has Clash magic, these days? In this era of cookie-cutter punk this album, with its with its angry, verbose barking vocals and bold composition is extremely refreshing even as it jars and disturbs.

The Alter Boys "The Exotic Sounds of..." (Fractured Transmitter POB 33518 Cleveland OH 44133) Nothing worse than bad Zappa impersonators. Oh, except for Bad Zappa impersonators with a little Nu Metal thrown in.

Alix "ground" (Go Down) Seductive sludge that combines heavy guitar sludge with sexy witch incantations.

All Tomorrow's Party "you doo right, you doo slide" (Alive/Bomp) Japanese drone-based psyche that actually breaks out into rock n roll every now and then! Move over Loudness!

"Alternative Animals" CD-Rom/CD (Shock, 200 Beavers Road Northcote, Victoria, Australia 3070) This is an absolutely incredible release with 70s Australian punk tracks from Saints, Radio Birdman, Australian X, Manikins and more. A lot of the tracks are live, and all the songs are amazing, Australia had just about the most talented punk scene in the world, as they understood that punk rock was punk AND rock from the get-go. The video disc (CD-Rom rather than DVD, odd choice) has fantastic l;ive footage of Boys Next Door, Nick Cave's punk band, and Cave talking about it. Plus there's lots of stuff with punk fans, zine contents, and part of a live Saints concert that is absolutely killer. This is a "gotta get" release.

ambry "holding on by the blindfolds we hide behind" (The Death Scene 8642 Bay Parkway Brooklyn NY 11214) Badbry.

American Minor (Red Ink/Jive/Zomba) Stadium rawk tha t made me pull out my lighter! Whooo!

American Zen "Level 1" (Shaolin POB 602 Tujunga CA 91043) Not my favorite CD (not even my favorite Buddhist CD) but this has its moments now and zen.

Amestory (Portia) Amestboring.

a million billion "today we love you" (Filthy Schoolgirls) I could [redacted] a million billion Tylenols after listening to this.

The Amino Acids "Destroy the Warming Sun" (BWL, theamonoacids.com) Extraterrestrial surf created by mysterious masked eccentrics. Oh, there was a golden age of masked surf/garage in the 90s where a new theme band turned up every week, but those days are past, and today any group of nuts willing to sweat through a set for the sake of genius showmanship gets space-high marks. While good surf is usually hard to distinguish from other good surf, this excels at a few things, including driving drums, expert insertion of those sorta Middle Eastern Dick Dale guitar runs, and superb song title-ing (perhaps surf's most important component).

Angel Corpus Christi "Louie Louie" (Gulcher) Minimalist, haunting, accordion-driven songs that pay tribute to Lou Reed by covering his music, singing about his hair and channeling his oddness. All VU fans should own this and all all-elderly man accordion societies likely should avoid this.

Angie Screams "radio" (angiescreams.com) Axl Rose should just hire this guy to be him next time instead of getting more plastic surgery.

A Northern Chorus "Bitter Hands Resign" (Sonic Unyon POB 57347 Jackson Stn. Hamilton ON Canada L8P 4X2) A Bore-thern Bore-us.

Antigone Rising "From the Ground Up" (Hear/Lava) Antogonizingly Boring

Appreciation "Healing The Fatherwound" (On/On Switch POB 641122 SF CA 94164) Organic psychedelic noisescapes that groove yet disturb.

Aprendiz Book Three comix (ufa.typepad.com) Adam Suerte continues his serialized comic book documentary of his early days in the tattoo business. While I am never completely enamored with graffiti drawing style in comics (it's hard to be honestly expressive with such a stylized line), I am really impressed with the storytelling in this issue, as our hero finally moves from the mopbucket to the flesh. Unlike the hipster tattoo shop reality shows that just hit cable, Adam isn't all about being cool (though he has some investment, in one panel he imagines a sexy customer thinking he's cute), and this comic is really about the detailed dynamics of tattooing in a way that isn't about myths and attitude. Learn about soldering needles! Learn when it is economical to run the ultrasonic cleaner! Learn why $30 tattoos cost so little! I eagerly await the next chapter.

A.R.E. Weapons "Free In The Streets" (Defend) A.R.E.rrrggggh!

Army of Me "demos" (armyofmeonline.com) Army of Ecch.

John Ashfield "Distance to Empty" (Poppop POB 31440 SF, CA 94131) Nerdy bubblegum pop for nerds to chew and pop. AND I'M ONE OF THEM...I LOVE YOU JOHN!

Sam Ashworth "Gonna Get It Wrong Before I Get It Right" (Runway, runwaynetwork.com) What's an Ash worth? A million bucks if your Ash can write songs like these!

Asya "Futurists Against.T43.OC3AN" (Web of Mimicry) Slow developing walls of ominous audio that will knock you on your assya.

Atlantic Manor "Sneaking Up On the Death Scene, "" "The Trouble That You Left" (Do Too 8321 SW 30 St Miami FL 33155) Seven self-released CDs in 5 years by a unknown solo artist brings to mind Jandek, but if you ask me his music brings to mind a Bob Dylan 45 played at 33.

At The Drive In "This Station IS Non Operational" (Fearless 13772 Goldenwest St. #545 Westminster CA 92683) At The Drive In became popular in the underground because they made powerful angular, dynamic post-punk that was dynamic and had great drumming. But they became popular with the masses because they had big hair that bounced around when they flailed. Thus, a standard anthology CD would fail to capture a large portion of their magic. This thankfully comes with a DVD of videos, so the bouncing and non-behaving is presented in full glory. All hail the CD/DVD drive!

August Born (Drag City POB 476867 Chicago IL 60647) Low key folk-and-experimental-informed psychedelic music is [redacted] actual movement these days, and this is a nice, quiet reflection on that movement. The Six Organs of Admittance dude and Japanese psyche-ster L (ex-Ghost, Fushitsusha, and Marble Sheep) sent music back and forth across the sea to be layered upon by each non-communicative collaborator resulting in the ultimate chill out mixtape of 2005.

The Avett Brothers "Live, Vol-2" (Ramseur 6565 Foothills lane Concord, NC 28025) Old timey music for young people who want to have a funky, hipster banjo hoedown at their next Civil War recreation after party.

Bacon and Egg "...are Fanduvo" (Wantage) An epic disco-metal fable of knights and daze. Better than when Michael Jackson fought the dragon at Victory Tour (or maybe it was Randy) and he killed it. Well, not really better than that, but really good.

Backyard Babies "Tinnitus" (Liquor and Poker 2323 W. El Segundo Blvd. Hawthorne, CA 90250) Rocked [redacted] ridiculously.

The Bad Vibes "All The Right Ways To Do You Wrong" (Steel Cage POB 29247 Phila PA 19125) This band actually sounds like they want to kill me. Seriously.

Baker Gurville Army "Flying In and Out of Stardom – The Anthology" (Sanctuary) Ginger Baker and the guy from Gun ("Race with the Devil") got together way back when and made some noise. "Memory Lane" is a drum showcase, and for a Ginger record that is key, but the slow stuff here isn't too hot. This draws from the 60s power trio concept, but is stingy with the power (way too many slow songs and mellow blues numbers).

Balzac "Out of the Grave and Into the Dark" (Misfits) Though these dudes are known as the Japanese Misfits, I can't hear it here. The pop, pop punk and jangly elements erase any spookiness, and none of their chanting hooks match even the worst Misfits-Mach 1 songs. And why the name, have they actually read Balzac? He's not exactly a scary writer. Maybe they saw a cast of Rodin's big dick Balzac sculpture in some sculpture garden near his Gates of Hell sculptures and thought they were related.

Bane "The Note" (Equal Vision POB 38202 Albany NY 12203) Hardcore that will ignite the hard corps. This guy screams because he *means it!*

Bang! Bang! "Electric Sex" (Morphius) There are a lot of sexy, kinda funny, somewhat absurdist new wave-ish bands out there, and most have some charm, but few are actually great. Bang! Bang! are the real thing, this is a band with an energy, a presence, an electricity and an ultra-high talent quotient that combine to make their music and shows act as both aphrodisiacs and dancerodesiacs. This EP is the most Bang! you will get for your buck.

barabino/merce "Continuo" (Listen Loudest) So ambient I'm ambivalent.

The Barracudas (NDN) If I liked this band back in the day then I would be disappointed that this sucks, so it's fortunate for me that I never liked them.

Barbez "Insignificance" (important, importantrecords.com) Barbez are amazing because they take elements of French, North African, South American, and Eastern European sounds but instead of sounding like clinical or precious "World Music" they sound like moody, chilling music of the actual world, not the exoticized one. This made me joyously sad.

Baseball Furies "All-American Psycho" (Big Neck POB 8144 Reston VA 20195) This reissues the Furies early 10" and single which I dug then and dig more now that the band has moved to Chicago and began hitting me with musical bats on a regular basis. Not garage rock or trash rock or any other kind of rock, this is just ROCK.

B.C. Camplight "Hide, Run Away" (One Little Indian) B.C. stands for Bad Choice.

Bear comics by Jamie Smart (Slave Labor Graphics) I guess poop and dead animals are kind of funny.

Chris Beard "Live Wire" (northern Blues 225 Sterling Road unit 19 Toronto ONT M6R 282) Worse than you'd guess.

Beautiful Skin "Everything, All This, and More" (GSL POB 65091 LA, CA 90065) Perhaps a collection of rarities, unreleased material and demos by a disbanded duo you probably never heard of seems excessive, but when you hear the opening track, "Skin," one of the most seductive, upbeat, strange tunes I've dug this year, it makes you lament the loss of a band you never knew was there to lose.

Brian Bennett "Aim High the televisual soundtrack" (RPM) A brilliant concept album, this compiles archival tracks by Bennett, a Brit 50s Rocker turned Shadow turned studio ace, that were never commercially available but that were sold to TV cop shows as funky 70s stock music. By assembling the best tracks and putting them in a relatively narrative order we now have a soundtrack CD to a 70s

movie that never was. Great informative liner notes make this release a real gem.

Ed Bentley "Here We Go Again! (EDBENTLEYMUSIC.COM) Bentley, a 60s rockabilly who recorded as Jimmy Satan back in the day, was apparently cruising the Internet when he found himself listed on the Rockabilly Hall of fame website. He got in touch, was inducted into the Hall, and to celebrate recorded this traditional album of standards and few great originals. This sounds like what it is, a grown up rocker making a pretty slick, mature CD,; no raw madness here. But Ed's voice sounds great and I hope his re-acquaintance with Rockabilly goes great, hope to see him at one of the fests soon!

Jacob Berendes "Foreign Policy" (Corleone) All the attributes of singer-songwriter-ism without actually sucking (making it listenable without cringing). All the strangeness of outsider musicianship without actually seeming to be mentally ill (making it listenable without guilt). Lyrics about the introspective musings of a comic book Martian superhero juxtaposed with a theoretical ad for a major straw company. I other words, TOO awesome!

Betrayed "Addiction" (Bridge Nine POB 990052 Boston MA 02199) This band is so straightedge. How straightedge are they? They are so straight edge they paint X's ▬ the little hands of their watches. They are so straight edge that when the street sign says "Don't Walk" they say "At least I can fucking think." They are so straight edge they didn't drink liquor even after they turned 21!

Betty Paginated zine (www.bettypaginated.blogspot.com) This magazine celebrates the raunchiest, filthiest, nastiest aspects of naughty pop culture with a kind of purity and joy that makes porn, wrestling, sleazy comic books and dirty internet sites seem positively wholesome.

Blare Bitch Project "Double Distortion Burger" (Steel Cage POBox 29247 Philadelphia PA 19125) The female-fronted Frehley's Comet!

Bloodshot Bill "Rockabilly Trash" (www.bloodshotbill.com bloodshotbill@hotmail.com). So, what is this "Psychobilly" stuff you've been hearing about lately? Is it a movement (25-plus years old), centered around England, Western Europe, Japan, and even Russia, with guys in flattops and tattoos, playing jacked up versions of American Rockabilly? Is it their progenitors, the early Crumps, or their mad, mad daddies, Charlie Feathers, The Phantom, Hasil Adkins, and The Legendary Stardust Cowboy? In truth, the tag probably applies to all these people, though it has little or no meaning today. Rockabilly is SUPPOSED to be psychotic, anyway, something of a rarity in an ocean of polite, slick and predictable modern 'Billy bands. What passes for "Psycho" usually isn't much more interesting. Bands like Tiger Army have plenty of Metal backbone and Misfits overtones, but little if any Rockabilly influence. The common ground, where all these things come together (except the Misfits/Metal rehashing part) and make sense musically can be found (would you believe?) in Quebec. Bloodshot Bill has been going at it, butt nekkid on stage (that's a figure of speech, meaning he plays everything himself, live. No computer assistance. No overdubs. No shit). I dug his last CD, but this one's more solid. It gives you a pretty good idea of what he sounds like, live. At times, he does sound a bit like The Meteors (if Paul Fenech did it all himself), and at other times, he sounds remarkably like Charlie Feathers (in a better world, a collaboration between Bloodshot Bill and The Knoxville Girls, produced by Jeffrey Evans, would've outsold The White Stripes within minutes), and his insane vocal style has even been compared favorably to Sparky from Demented Are Go (one band from the '80's U.K. Psychobilly scene that's recently acquired a large American following - though they were good when I saw them recently, they sounded a lot like Motorhead, and seemed to have shaken off nearly all their 'Billy roots). Bloodshot Bill is in a class all his own, he's got the sense of humor a lot of his peers lack, and he can play guitar and drums simultaneously without sounding like Hasil Adkins (not that that's a bad thing, but if you were at the "One Man Band Festival" in Chicago a few years back, that "Chicken Walk" beat got tiresome). If you're hungry for what Rockabilly's SUPPOSED to sound like, here's your boy.

The Bloody Hollies "If Footmen Tire You..." (Alive/Bomp) Arresting, seductive trash rock that drew blood and drank it.

Blowfly "Fahrenheit 69" (Alternative Tentacles) A true legend of filth, Blowfly has been making fairly dirty records since 1960 and absolutely degenerate records since the early 70s, crafting crudities like "Shitting On The Dock of a Bay." A cynic might say that AT head honcho Jello Biafra drafted Blowfly as a replacement for his label's recently deceased foul-mouthed African American artist, Wesley Willis. What the two artists have in common is that they perform in front of guffawing Caucasian audiences, but fundamentally the dynamic of those performances are very different. There was something problematic about all-white crowds laughing so heartily at Willis profane rants, as if safely hearing a black man's anger vented was the funniest thing in the world. Blowfly on the other hand isn't cursing because he's angry or dangerous or violent...he is cursing because he is unashamedly juvenile. Changing an R. Kelly lyric into, "I Believe My Dick Can Fly" or a Jerry Butler ballad into "Your Precious Cunt" isn't really that funny unless you are willing to remember what it was like to be a kid who giggled at any curse word. Because of this required regression, experiencing Blowfly today isn't as much about exoticizing a dirty old black man, the way audiences do the Fat Possum blues acts, but it is about being a stupid, giddy little kid. Because of this intentionally lack of sophistication, if Blowfly's historically political new label was expecting some astute criticism of government policy on this new album they might not be getting what they bargained for. Though the title and cover art of the CD reference *Fahrenheit 9/11* and the first Bad Brains' album, Blowfly is no Michael Moore or H.R. Despite the album's loose "Blowfly for President" theme, the artist formally known as Clarence comes off as possibly the most apolitical African American Floridian in the Bush era. The most scathing critique he has of the current administration is that the president's name is a synonym for vagina.

Blowtops "Mad Monk Medication" EP (Big Neck POB 8144 Reston VA 20195) Clearly Buffalo is one of the sickest cities in America, as this music sounds like some disease germs were given electric guitars, broken amps, and told to express themselves.

Blue Monday "Rewritten" (Bridge Nine) Canadian hardcore that sounds more like 80s NYCHC than Joey Shithead stuff, which shows why I shouldn't be reviewing new bands, being that all my frames of reference are over twenty years old. That said, this is pretty brutal and badass.

Blue Suede News magazine (Box 25 Duvall WA 98019-0025) The magazine with rockability!

The Body/Get Killed split ep (Corleone) The body create a sonic wall of terror that could repel an army of Vikings. Get Killed are more like a swirling swarm of hardcore killer bees, or perhaps flying piranha, stripping flesh off attacking hordes. Either way this will take care of your Viking problems.

Bold "The Search 1985-1989" (Revelation POB 5232 Huntington Beach CA 92615-5232) This is a complete discography of a N YC hardcore band from the late 80s. As with hardcore all over the country 1985-1989 is kind of weak compared with 1981-1985, but you can't blame the teens on this record for not being born earlier. Considering the meathead nature of a lot of 80s hardcore from that region this is actually pretty intelligent, nuanced and focused. Everything here (possibly due to re-mastering) sounds polished and clean, not the best sound for angry teen music, but overall this demonstrates some decent chops, and as a minor chapter in punk history this is worth adding to your history books./

Bottomofthehudson "Holiday Machine" (Absolutely Kosher) Should be called Topoftheworld! Swirling clouds of joyous dreariness!

Boyracer "Insults & Insights" (Kittridge) Boy oh boy this fuzzy, poppy, indie rock raced into my heart.

Meredith Bragg and the Terminals "Vol. 1" (kora records) Terminally dull.

Brakes "Give Blood" (Rough Trade) Expansive indie that runs into some boring arty, meek voiced indie clichés on some laps and then hurdles over them on others, making danceable, funny, oddball music. A Johnny Cash cover, a disco tribute and some genuine weirdness make this worth perusing.

Bridge and Tunnel Club "Next best Letdown" (bridgeandtunnelclub.com) Brilliant Bundle of Love!

The Brimstone Solar Radiation Band (Big Dipper) I got Brim-stoned on this Norwegian psyche-revival band with a Love meets Steppenwolf sound. Although Love probably actually did meet Steppenwolf, and no "sound" came out of it. I was trying to use a record reviewer trope, and it went awry, I apologize.

Bronco Busters "pulse racing" (Big Dipper, www.bigdipper.no) The fifth sound on this album is a cowbell strike, so obviously this all girl pop punk rock band knows what it is doing. A short, punchy, fun album that actually rocks.

Billy Brush "Lair" (billybrush.com) Brushed with brilliance.

"Bubblepop" compilation (RPM) You need to track down this British import – it compiles twenty early 70s track from the novelty label UK, including high pitched adolescent Ricky Wilde singing about astronauts, Simon Turner turning out the funniest glam knockoff about a shoeshine boy, and Jonathan King doing both a retarded Japanese old man impersonation (in a *Kung Fu* Tv show cash -n record) and a Cockney Reggae man (opposite a Reggae baby). Delightfully ridiculous pop that's better than anything Oasis or Radiohead will ever do!

The Buff Medways "Medway Wheelers" b/w "A Quick One" (Damaged Goods POB 45854 London E11 1YX England) Billy Childish will never become Billy Adult-ish, because singles like this make clear his youthful love of raw, fun garagish rawk will never die. In addition to the poppy original track (I think it's a bout bike riding) there is also a Who cover that perfectly recreates the silly mod Who-rmonies.

The Bugs (Listen Loudest) Awesome 60s-style garage, this is my fave Croatian CDR release ever!

Bunnygrunt "Karen Hater's Club" (Happy Happy Birthday To Me POB 742n Athens GA 30603) These bunnies are still grunting in a way that is as cute and lo fi and semi-ept (as opposed to inept) as ever.

Burdocks "what we do is secret" (Black Mountain Music) The *Merde*-docks

Shauna Burns "every thought" (Red Rock 2437 Ailsa Craig St. Henderson NV 89044) Burns' voice and complex piano work is enchanting, but I suspect it would be incredibly enchanting to Dungeon an d Dragons- playing Tori Amos fans who work at renaissance fairs. Which describes me to a "t!" I'm burning for Burns!

Burn To Shine: Chicago DVD (Trixie , trixirdvd.com) This series has local bands each play one song in a doomed house, and then supplements the beautifully documented performances with footage of the house being destroyed . What was revealed in *BTS1* is that to have bands play without a traditional audience (they are just in the house with the camera crew) reveals how a band performs their music rather than how a band works a crowd. Even with spectacular live acts like the Ponys and Tight Phantomz you don't see a group playing to the camera as much as you see a group doing what they feel is the visual aspect of their pure song. Obviously a Wilco or Tortoise is really about thr importanc eof the music, but it is seeing someone great like Lonesome Organist being presented seriously and soberly and not treated as novelty that makes this special. Also, unlike Vol. 1's DC house, by being in an ancient Chicago house you really feel a sense of the home's history and its place in the neighborhood. Highly recommended.

Bush Chemists "Raw Raw Dub" (ROIR) Futuristic primitivism. The dubbest dub ever!

Buttersprites (Dionysus) Smooth as butter, as sweet as Sprite, and on (thanks to these ladies' tuff attitude and pounding floor tom) as hot as wasabi mustard.

Buzzov*en "Welcome to Violence" (Alternative Tentacles) Let's revisit and reminisce about shit I never need to hear again.

"BYO Records 2005 Sampler" (BYO POB 67609 LA, CA 90066) BYO has one of its funnest lineups in years, and this sampler showcases Clit 45, Manic Hispanic, Throw Rag, Shark Soup and the awesome Briefs.

C "Universum" (54 40 or Fight) I would give this at least a B+! Post-rockish music so atmospheric and engaging that a concentrated listen is akin to being in that chamber from *Altered States*, though I didn't turn into a monkey-man.

Andi Camp "Magnetic" (Grafton 5251 NE 33rd Ave Portland OR 97211) Though her reedy singing and stuttery time signatures and haunting songs are good, I still like Andy Capp better.

CanBe "Pluck" (canbemusic.com) CanBore.

Cantankerous (Tommy Boy) A disco demon toasting over Satanic heavy dance music! Hella good.

Captured! By Robots "The Ten Commandments" (Robotic Resistance, POB 225312 SF CA 94122) This double CD starts with an incredible disc that uses punk, metal, ska, and all absurdist musical points in between to tell the story of Exodus. Of course, since the theme of C!BR is that the robots have enslaved a musical human, this story of slavery and rebellion rings profoundly with the captee, but his robots, particularly his evil one not only don't care, they (like you) hate ska. This is a robot rock masterpiece! Lighter is disc 2, a Jane Fonda-style work out disc which will get you in shape for the coming robot revolt.

Carbon 14 magazine (pob 29247 Phila PA 19125) The best trash rock and trash art magazine in America. Now with CDs instead of vinyl for you sub-30 year olds!

Frank Carillo and the Bandoleros "Bad Out There" (Jezebel POB 729 Holbrook NY 11741) Carillo is a behind-the-scenes super veteran of the international music scene who reveals himself to be a bluesy singer-songwriter with a raspy voice that would make Tom Waits offer him a lozenge. The stellar production on this album makes the more powerful, ominous, big-blues-rock numbers really grab the listener and shake. "When The Levee Breaks" is as rocking and twice as cool as any other levee song you already dig.

The Carpettes (NDN, ndnrecords.com, POB 131471 The Woodlands, TX 77393) After decades of dormancy these pop punk pioneers show that they can be just as bland, toothless and horrible as the top young acts of today!

Casionauts "Bailamos Morimos Juntos!" (Omega Point Records) Should be called CasioNUTS because these guys crazy for cheapio electronica...and you will be too!

Cat and Dog Dialogue/Red Pony Clock split CD (no label) C&DD make weird chipper-ly dreary music with accordion and inexpensive-sounding keyboards. RPC do the same thing but add a horn and maybe a glockenspiel here or there. In other words, BEST SPLIT CD OF THE YEAR!

Cats & Jammers "propose toast" (Scotch Hell 1573 N. Milwaukee Ave PMB 499 Chicago IL 60622) They've been around forever but this band still manages to sound like high school kids making joyful, perfect, dumb pop that tackles the big issues – girls, rock and more girls. This CD features a few new songs and a bunch of "greatest hits" that you never heard but should have.

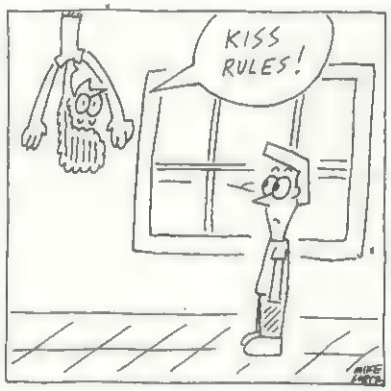
Cesar "World of Change" (Darque) Ouch! I guess this guy is supposed to be a great Latin guitarist, and this is an attempt at pop crossover by imitating and lifting exact chunks of Marc Anthony radio hits. Did I say "ouch" yet?
å
Champion "Time Slips Away" (Bridge Nine POB 990052 Boston MA 02199-0052) Raspy-voiced powerful Nuevo-hardcore that pummels with integrity!

"Chappelle's Show Season 2 Uncensored" DVD (Comedy Central) The season so good it was futile trying to top it! You may have seen these shows a zillion times on TV, but hearing the commentary tracks and seeing the outtakes are really worth it. Unfortunately Chappelle was either already starting to disconnect from the project or was pretty baked when they did the comments so his collaborator Neal Brennan comes off as likely creatively dominant than he was (not Neal's fault, he almost begs Chappelle to say stuff). But hearing the backstory and details of the Rick James episode (especially hearing reports of Eddie Murphy's comments) makes a brilliant piece better. Perhaps the best moment of the outtakes is seeing Wayne Brady being *very* reluctantly coaxed into uttering "Is Wayne Brady gonna have to choke a bitch?"

The Chicahrones "When PigsFly" (Camobear) If you likeyour hip hop to have all the good rapping or decent production or hooks of any sort hidden amongst a jungle of annoying skits, bad production ideas and incohesive samples, than this is for you.

Chrome Pistola "Victimize Yourself" (Mindless 410 S. Lincoln Blvd. #285 Venice CA 90291) Hip Hop inspires the beats and phrasing of this rock record, which sounds like Everlast 's "blues" stuff, but way better (which isn't saying much). But this does know how to groove, which is saying something.

***The CIA Makes Science-Fiction Unexciting* #3** zine (Microcosm POB 14332 Portland OR 97293) A timely look at evil U.S. semi-secret foreign policy and mischief-making that should help erode your war support.



A CEILING FAN

Civilized Age (self-released) Impressive debut from Chicago Mod/Psychsters who've been kicking around for quite a while. Though the fact that they only gig sporadically makes each gig special, it also, unfortunately, cements their status as a "sleeper" act. It may be that they prefer it that way. The Civilized Age aren't weighed down heavenly by the burdens of blind Anglophilia, even though they've got the look down, and are well aware that, in this day of myriad reissues, there's no excuse for not having good influences. Their sound is comparable to The Loons and The Embrooks, both of whom they've performed with, but they interpret British Psych and Freakbeat their own way. It's not a slavish tribute to something that's already been done, so much as digging deep into the well of multicoloured oilstains and setting it on fire. No phony English accents, not even very many riffs you've probably heard before (though the bassline on the opener, "The Bells I Hear" draws from the "Taxman"/"Start!"/"In My Own Time" trilogy, it's done with real class). Very impressive leads from guitarist, Ben Piranni ("The Face of 2004."), who can kick up a psychedelic storm with a minimum of effects, though the entire group turns in some ace performances. The group is focused, they spent a long time making this, and it shows. Hopefully it is what it appears to be, an indication of bigger and better things.

The Clergy "all who fly" (Boot To The Head POB 9005 Portland OR 97207) How often do you get to hear good rocking "Alternative" music these days. I remember this band from a dozen yeas ago when this magazine was young, and they seem to have been cryogenically preserved, making good early 90s music today, as if ten shitty Smashing Pumpkins albums and solo projects haven't happened since.

Click Five "Greetigns from Imrie House" (Lava) Eccch. That's some really bad music. This album does have a wimpy power pop song by Paul Stanl ey of KISS in which he pays homage to himself by inserting the lyric "She's hotter than hell," but other than that, don't let your 14 year old daughter/sister/Morman childbride listen to this crap.

Clit 45 "Self-hate Crimes" (BYO POB 67609 LA CA 90067) Nasty punk with great drumming and some legit chanting involved. Clit-tastic!

Cocopiazo comic by Daniel Warner (Slave Labor Graphics) John Victory brawls with death, loses, and LIVES! This odd comic is one of SLG's best books, so if you like your surrealism accessible, this is worth a read.

Coffinberry "from now now" (Morphius) My least favorite Cap'n Crunch flavor is now my new favorite band!

Cold "A Different Kind of Pain" (Lava) Mold.

Coldhandsdeadheart zine by Michael Twohig (72-1 Meadow Farm South North Chili, NY 14514) Michael can draw a penguin on fire better than anyone I know.

Col. Knowledge and the Lickety Splits "Fall In Love All Over Again With..." (Alive) Absolutely genius 60s pop by kids who have silliness, soul, power pop sensibilities and sycadelic sexiness.

Colour Haze (Swamp Room) Narrative post-rock that weaves a tale I can't follow.

Continental "what was gained from what was lost" (U-Dotudot.net) If you like your instrumental "post-rock" mellow with out all that free-jazz or angular math rock edginess than this is the chill out album you've been waiting for.

Dane Cook "Retaliation" (Comedy Central Records) Comedians that act like they are cooler and handsomer than you are hard to laugh at. Usually comedy has to do with vulnerability or with being a truth-teller who has perspective because they are an outsider. That's why Jews, Blacks and even Canadians (usually held up as the exception to the Jew rule) are the foundation of the last century of comedy. Now I'm not blaming Dane Cook for being good looking, but the problem here is this CD's packaging of Cook as a super-cool stud, and as a very important comic deserving of a triple-disc (2 CDs, 1 DVD). It feels like he is being marketer the way Andrew "Dice" Clay was, as a virile rock star of comedy, and his slightly above average material is disappointing in that light. I will grant that at least all three discs are different, meaning he is more than a one-note comic. The first CD is a set of comedy where the basis of most of the humor is Cook applying Hollywood clichés to real life, the signature piece being his fantasy of being involved in a cinematic heist. The set on disc 2, while rhythmically similar, is observational comedy about being in actual human life, much of it about relationships with the opposite sex. And the DVD, unlike previous Comedy Central releases, isn't a stand up concert special featuring all the same material, but rather a collection of clips of Cook on a variety of odd TV shows translating his bits into puppetry, animation, and more. I never actually laughed during any of the 3 hours, but this was still decent stuff, just not worthy of this grand release. But the marketing and overkill apparently worked; the thing sold damn well.

The Coral "Invisible Invasion" (Columbia) Pretty as pink coral.

Coughs "Fright Makes Right" (Load) Will clear any room of all but the true geniuses and deaf.

Country Teasers "Live Album" (in The Red, POPB 50777 LA, CA 90050) This band of evil geniuses produces bizarre albums that don't make any sense in a glorious ball of confusion. This live comp of strange cover songs, weird semi-aborted attempts to play album tracks, and improvisational chaos (and not improv chaos like noise music, but improv chaos like an improv comedy troupe on horse tranquilizers handed instruments and microphones) is their most chaotic and cohesive thing ever. Whatever is wrong with these crazy fuckers makes perfect sense here!

Graham Cousens "living room sessions" (Spade Kitty) He's such a good songwriter I wish Graham was my cousin!

Don Covay "Hot Blood: The Mercury Years Vol. 2" (RPM) This amazing church-based soul-funk LP is a champ because of its great "cash in on the Ali craze" song "Rumble in the Jungle." Thought there is only one bonus track the fact that it is a great "cash in on the Angela Davis" craze track makes this a must-have.

The Cribs "The New Fellas" (Wichita) Should be called The Crips, because this is so good it should be illegal! Cocky, rockin' pop that cocks, rocks and pops.

Crimson Sweet "Eat the Night" (Shake It 4156 Hamilton Ave Cincinnati OH 45223) I loved their last album, but these New York Sweeties have topped it with a killer collection of post-glam bar rock that demonstrates exactly how rock bands should rock. Crimson Sweet, rock thanks you!

The Cringe "scratch the surface" (Listen 375 Greenwich Street NYC 10013) Perfectly named band.

Crosstide "life as a spectator" (Slowdance, slowdance.com) The opposite of fun.

The Cubby Creatures "after the deprogramming" (Rodent 590 Minnesota St. SF CA 94107) Joyfully dense (arrangement wise, not intelligent-wise) music that sounds like it was made by joyfully dense angels.

Cubik & Origami (Widehive.com) Should be called Genius and Other Genius! Experimental deejay groovy music that will give you a great big kiss of bliss.

Curl Up And Die "The One Above All The End Of All That Is." (Revelation) Absolutely the best contemporary hardcore band. CUAD deliver another album that is so intense and devastating and inspiring in its doomsaying that it made me love life. How can you kill yourself knowing another CUAD album may come out next year? Great artwork and clever song titles continue to garnish the brutality.

Cherie Currie "Beauty's Only Skin Deep" (Lemon) Joan Jett and Lita Ford had successful post-Runaways solo careers in part because they had strong voices (far more distinct than their former frontgirl Curie's average vox), but most importantly because they had strong material that convinced rock fans that they were legit. As the recent (shoddy) Runaways documentary demonstrated, Curie was in fact the best showman of the bunch, completely magnetic on stage. Unfortunately, that doesn't come across on vinyl (or on this CD reissue) and her continued association with Kim Fowley whose bubblegum sensibilities couldn't grasp the rock the Runaways' growing fans wanted, doomed sweet Cherie to the bargain bin. Nothing extra on this reissue, but I love seeing the sexy album cover without an actual notch cut out of it.

Cut City (GSL POB 65091 LA, CA 90065) This punky dance music has cut after cut after cut after one other cut (there's only 4 songs) of awesome angular attitudinous strangeness that you can groove and move to.

The Cute Manifesto by James Kochalka (Alternative Comics) Everyone loves his monkey fighting robot comic/song/movie, and rightfully so, and some of his story comics (particularly his cat and bird stuff) are pretty darn good. But this is his deep philosophical comic/essay collection where he ponders the nature of art, the meaning of 9/11 and other such light fare. Nothing he says here seems wrong or off-kilter, but like his cartoony-style, none of his philosophizin' is particularly challenging. So for young readers, particularly young readers on mushrooms, this may be mind-altering, but not for most. That said, I'm glad he did it, and his draftsmanship is improving (he sometimes even draws himself as a human now).

Daikaiju (Reptile Records) Friendly surf/spy instrumental music with indie rock guitar sounds mixed into the reverb. Should be called Daikickass!

The Daily Show with John Stewart: Indecision 2004 DVD box (Comedy Central Home Video) There is definitely an awesome DVD box set to be made from Comedy Central's *The Daily Show*. There have been numerous timeless "reports" filed from around the country where the show's deadpan "reporters" deftly abuse players in absurd smalltown nearly-news stories. There could also be a montage of Stewart's funniest newsdesk digs at the Bush administration. This set, however, is not the best collection possible. The coverage of the '04 election was flawed partially because the show started to doubt Bush would win, partially because they were wrong about a lot of stuff ("Prelude to a Recount" was the name of their election night coverage), and partially because the coverage just wasn't the funniest stuff they'd done. The jokes from the convention floor weren't hilarious. The bonus material here is OK, (Steven Colbert's backstage look at *The Daily Show* is pretty funny), but overall if you have 30 bucks to spend on a Comed y Central boxset get *Chappelle* or *Reno 911* and tune into *The Daily Show* every night.

Dina D'Alessandro "is it safe?" (workerants) A singer-songwriter who can really sing and really write songs. A little too college-rock for me, but if I was a 19-year old college girl this would help me get through.

Damage "Velocity" (redletterdigital) Damn, ugh!

The Danger Men "Summer of Danger" (Wild Eagle) Unsafe Aussie garage nuggets-punk about sharks, ships and a robot girl.

The Dead Betties "Summer of 93" (heartcore, 28 Locust St. unit 105 Brooklyn NY 11206) Action packed, dynamic, bombastic hardcore without all that evil and hate that marked classic NYC H/C. Should be called All The Way Live Betties.

Dead Eyes Open comic by Matthew Shepherd and Roy Boney, Jr. (Slave Labor Graphics) Best zombie comic in years. In the first issue of this 6 issue series Americans are becoming zombie-fied, but not losing their minds. They want to live normal lives but they stink of decay, their kids fear them and they need extra protein (that's not brains they're eating , it's tofu). And the government is out to secretly destroy them. Thus, the zombies aren't the predators in this story, but a victimized minority. Our hero, a psychiatrist, joins the zombie underground resistance and the dramatic shenanigans ensue. Rad!

"Dear Johnny...A Tribute to Cash" compilation (HairBall8 5150 Broadway #133 San Antonio TX 78209) Not as cool as that tribute album from the late 80s, but still cool as Bastard Sons of Johnny Cash, Dale Watson, Supersuckers, Ajesse Dayton and some less known but totally rockin' psychobilly acts give the Man In Black a festive sendoff.

Death Before Dishonor "Friends Family Forever" (Bridge Nine) If my thesaurus yielded a brutally word for brutal I would have used it to describe this.

Death In Vegas "Satan's Circus" (Drone) Electro*necch*.

Decahedron "2005" (Lovitt) This massive, immediate, gripping music is futuristic in that "the future is scary" way and traditional in that "scary future movies were big in the 60s and 70s" way. Decked me head on!

Def Harmonic "All These Worldz" (Brilliante POB 578870 Chicago IL 60657) The post-rock of hip hop, Def Harmonic's music is weird and groovy when it really grooves, but when it doesn't its not too pleasing.

Jesse De La O "35 Years of Obscurity" (AOG Media POB 3652 Victoria TX 77903-3652) Jesse has spent decades making demos and singles and self-released CDs which at their best contain some of the rockingest gospel rock you will ever hear. Calling Jesse's vocals and guitar approach cliché would be wrong because he draws on classic rock so sincerely and so purely that he emerges as one of the realest rockers you will ever dig.

Demon City Wreckers "Inner Demons" (Hairball 8) Psychobilly is supposed to only be so good and this is so good it risks being too good but it aint, its demonically perfect.

Dengue Fever "Escape From Dragon House" (M80/Birdman) Originally established as a band that played covers of 60s Cambodian psychedelic pop songs, Dengue Fever discovered that by having a beautiful, enchanting Cambodian singer and excellent (non-Cambodian) backing musicians, meant that the possibilities were limitless...why not write original 60s-style Cambodian psychedelic pop songs! If that sounds like an insult, it is just because I am an asshole, as this album is actually incredible. This act's ear for what made world psyche special goes beyond what even the best garage-revivalists are usually capable of. This is so seductive and weird and great that it exponentially surpasses their covers album. This is one of the great albums this year.

Destination: Oblivion "decay" (DESTINATIONOBLIVION.COM) Destination: FUUCKINNG AWESOME. Arriving at said destination: THIS BAND!

Devo "Live 1980" DVD/CD (MVD) Though this may not be the best shot concert ever (Devo choreographed their lights, movements and props for the concert audience, not the video cameras) it is certainly clear that in 1980 Devo was one of the most powerful live bands on earth. With their best material still fresh and the size of their audience finally caught up to their sense of theatricality, Devolution was at its most powerful, and it's hard not to be thrilled watching this. The dual disc format is an odd choice here, as the CD isn't spectacular to listen to, especially compared to watching the video. But that said, you could make some Devo clothes and act out the concert with the CD!

Dexter Danger "hellafornia" (Orange Peal) Dexter Dismal.

The Dials "flex time" (Latest Flame 1657 #7 North Astor St. Milwaukee, WI 53202) This band's songs are such perfect raw minimal pop rock n roll that I listened to this twice and I felt like I'd heard it an un-boring 100 times, and after actually listening to it 100 times I still dig it. Dials = smiles! On the sad face tip, this CD features the drumming (and cute photos) of Doug Meis who was killed in an auto non-accident before this was released. He was also in Exo, the Skalars, Cattivo, and he filled in for the Goblins, Bang! Bang! (his last gig) and other acts. He was a joyful dude and wouldn't want people to not be happy listening to this just because he's not around, but I felt bad leaving out a mention of Doug.

Dian Diaz (Strip City) Beyond indistinct.

The Dick Cavett Show: Rock Icons (Sony) This box set is remarkable and done right. The way to release old TV shows with classic performances is to contextualize it by showing the whole show rather than just snippets. Ed Sullivan has been releasing hokey compilation tapes for years, but until his Beatles box set last year, with the four complete episodes with the Fabs (jugglers included) we couldn't recall what made Ed and TV special. Cavett is less a cultural giant than Sullivan (or even than Merv or Mike, who had the great John and Yoko DVD set...look for Cavett's similar release this Fall), so this really introduces his erudite interview approach to many. This set includes one of the great moment sin TV rock n roll, the day after-Woodstock episode where he interviewed David Crosby, Jefferson Airplane and others for a full episode mere hours after the fest. History had not processed the enormity of the thing yet, the documentary was a LONG way away, and this was arguably the first and best and freshest post-mortem. Straight, but not uptight ,Dick and super hippie rockers are a nice contrast. Also, see Sly Stone juxtaposed with Debbie Reynolds (actually, more similarities than you'd think), Bowie, the Stones, Joplin, Stevie and more. This is what DVD box sets should be.

Deke Dickerson "The Melody" (Major Label POB 304 Hollywood CA 90078) The funny thing about Dick Dickerson is the funny things about Dick Dickerson. Though folks in the rockabilly/roots/garage scenes have known for years that he is simply one of the finest working guitarists in music today, the joyful humor that saturates everything he's ever done sorta established him as a novelty artist in many eyes. And while he is one (as a Go Nut, and Untamed Youth , and as a backing musician for most of the rockabilly and r&b kooks and eccentrics who can still hobble to the stage this day) his talent is nothing to laugh at. Apparently sensitive about his underrated-ness, Deke has recorded his best album ever, one that while still upbeat and smile inducing, steers clear of the comical. Songs like "Good Time Gal," "Love Is Like a Song," and "Lookin' For Money" are just plain old good tunes with hooks and hummable parts and the elusive thing name din the record's title. There's, of course, no such market for gems like these

to be hits these days, but if there were I'd hop on the payola train and hook my wagon to this star!

Rob Dickinson "Fresh Wine for the Horses" (Sanctuary) Rob's Dickisgone.

Diesto "Doomtown 7" Pummeling rock that combines sludge and noise to make a wall that can damage multiple senses.

Digger and the Pussycats "fashion victim" (Spookyrecords.com) Undiggable.

Dimbulb "Trip Hammers" (Anti Music POB 20178 Ferndale MI 48220)This reissues music by a pretty good early 90s band that played grand stoner psyche music , and you never heard of them. So if you buy this you will have heard of them.

The Dirtbombs "if you don't already have a look" (In The Red POB 50777 LA, CA 90050) Mick Collins has spent the 90s and 00s proving that he is a band leader of vision, who can corral a funky, rocking act that transcends, titles like "garage," "soul," "funk," or "punk." This double CD features just about every single and comp track since the band's inception, featuring dozens of lo fi covers, semi-covers (Collins quotes other songs when improvising the way Wesley Willis quoted commercials) and originals that establish the Dirtbombs as left field brilliant. Rock n roll really works when it makes you move, rock and shake uncontrollably, and this does that without fucking around with tricks, flourishes or studio sheen. If you are a fan or want to be one, get this release.

Dirty Americans "Strange Generation" (Liquor and Poker 2323 W. El Segundo Hawthorne CA 90250) There's a lot of dirty bands reviewed this issue, and this one has pretty much the cleanest sound, as their raunchy Detroit rawk has some slick L.A. sheen to it. Not particularly original or super moving, but if this was the band at the club you were in you would be more than satisfied.

Dirty Children "Shut Off The World" (noizyninja) Although this is kinda awesome it somehow also borders on awful.

Dirty Fingers "Name of the Game Is...Cocaine!!" ep (Big Neck) Fucking fucked! Fuck yeah!

Dirty Three "Cinder" (Touch and Go) What do you get when a drill talks to a telephone? "Bore!" "Ring!"

Discordance Axis "Our Last Day" (Hydra Head) A swansong/rarities comp of a grind band that grinds so hard this turned my speakers into fine dust. Amazingly insane music.

Disengage "Application for an Afterlife" (Fractured Transmitter) Driving post-hardcore that engaged my rock gear.

The Divine Brown "The Dirty Gospel According to..." (Wrecked 'Em) Unlike their namesake, this rockin' rock band doesn't suck!

DMZ/38 "Never Surrender (DMZ39.com) Korean American rock that is politically attuned to Korean political strife, but that doesn't sound good enough o spread its important message.

Dog Men Poets (dogmenpoets.com, 7226 Blanco Rd. #1912 San Antonio, TX 78216) Sometimes "funky" refers to an unpleasant odor.

doris – an Anthology 1991-2001 by Cindy Gretchen Ovenrack Crabb (Microcosm POBox 14332 Portland OR 97217) This thick book compiles a decade of handwritten personal zines that feature writing (or to be more accurate, storytelling) so compelling that it really deserves this deluxe presentation. This is the journal of a woman trying to figure out life by piecing together the stories she has experienced. Unlike *Comethus*, there's not a sense that she's experiencing punk bohemia as a source of material; she just lives a life she needs to and then reflects on relationships, art, food, sex, pets, values, home, family, and more, in ways that are compelling to others while really personal to her. If you don't get why folks would read a journal zine, this is a good place to start.

Jason Dove "Pronto" (Carbon & Monoxide) When Doves Whine.

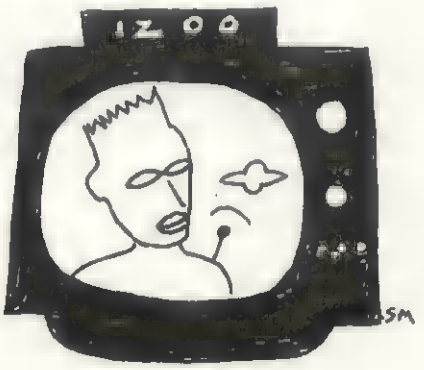
Scott "Deluxe" Drake "World's Strongest man" (Dionysus POB 1975 Burbank, CA 91507) Drake's slightly flat singing is oddly convincing in this album that balances crazed garage with restrained vocal numbers. Great, Scott.

The Dreadful Yawns (Bomp) Yawn-free country rock with such a vibrating, magical undercurrent that it's sort of psychedelic by default.

Dressy Bessy "Electrified" (Transdreamer POB 1955 NYC 10113) Their Dressy BEST-y!

Dr. Israel "Inna City Pressure" (ROIR) This is a remixed reissue of a 1998 album I never heard of, but should have. The good Dr. gets a Reggae sound by approaching the Rasta music with rock, electronics, ambient, and all definitions of dub. This is perhaps the least boring Reggae album of the last 15 years.

DROP DEAD/Look Back and Laugh split EP (Armegeddon POB 56 Providence RI 02901) Drop Dead are legends of damaged hardcore. And while I would have assumed that playing music like this for over ten years would lead to spontaneous immolation, apparently not only have these guys not blown up yet, but their powerful music is as seductively horrifying as ever. Look Back and Laugh echo classic 80s hardcore, but severely intensified to a blinding, deafening power for our course 21st century senses.



Dumb Angel #4 (Neptune's Kingdom Press) After over 15 years Domenic Priore and Brian Chidester have produced a new issue of their zine, which currently takes the form of a spectacularly beautiful softcover book about California 60s surf culture, its (Brian Wilson-centric) sounds, and its relationship to modernism (particularly to California architecture, though comparisons of Beach Boys LP design and Mondrian paintings are appreciated). One thing about the writing of Priore (who covers, amongst other things, Dick Dale's localized superstardom) and Harvey Kubernik (who does an awesome piece on Phil Spector and the scene satelliting his activities) is that when they discuss what they consider the golden age of L.A. culture there's definitely an "I was there" attitude, but unlike a lot of writing about old punk, it's not accompanied by "and you weren't" but rather by "and I wish you'd have been there too, here's what it was like..." This hefty tome features a Beach Boys' '64-'65 chronology or recording sessions, release dates, and ridiculous ephemera (copyright application dates included), a history of surfing movies, and fantastic montages of surf-themed advertisements and sexy Tiki pop imagery, plus much much more. You need this.

Dungen "ta det lugnt" (Kemado, kemado.com) What's not to dig about Swedish folk psyche with flutes and jamming and a buzz? Nothing's not to dig! And these guys have great hair. And it's not pronounced Dungeon, which would make them more medieval, but Dung-an, which makes them the shit! Officially this will stand as the worst review this critic's darling will get. It is, of course, a glowing review, but I mean worst written review.

Duplex Planet zine (POB 1230 Saratoga Springs NY 12866) Old people are the new little kids.

The Earaches "Get the Revolution Out of your Head" (Steel Cage POB 29247 Philadelphia PA 19125) Should be called the Earfuckers because they made love to hear-holes with satisfying perfect bar rock technique!

The 88 "Over and Over" (Mootron) The new Beach Boys! An 87 on a scale from 1 to 88!

Electric Frankenstein "Burn Bright, Burn Fast" (TKO) Though they claim to have released 13 albums in 13 years, I think EF released 13 albums last year, and usually I am unimpressed, but this features some of the most memorable, well crafted (if one "crafts" trash rock) tunes in their catalogue. And, in a really impressive achievement, they have their best cover art ever, a gruesome Gogos (*Famous Monsters*) painting of a rocking Franky!

Matt Elliot "Drinking Songs" (ici d'ailleuirs...) Why not just drink and don't sing.

Embrace "Out of Nothing" (LAVA) Grandly bland.

Embrace The End "Counting Hallways To The Left" (Abacus) Distinctly brutal and brutally distinct.

the end of the world (risk the rook) The end of my insomnia.

John Entwistle "So Who's the Bass Player: The Ox Anthology" (Sanctuary) I thought this would be a gushing tribute to a soldier lost, but basically I have to report that Entwistle made several decades of awful solo records, which are well represented in badness here. I never heard these tracks before which I thought that was an oversight. It was actually a wise move.

Jascha Ephraim (Exotic) Strangely erotic (in a frail, vulnerable way) synth-pop by a dude who is not embarrassed to play tapes of himself as a 2 year old or to play songs about dead-ish goldfish.

Epoxies "Stop the Future" (Fat) Wedding reception music for the day man and robot are legally allowed to marry!

The Escaped (TKO) Brutally manic hardcore that will make the mosh pit inside your head move in circles!

"Estrus kamikaze ass chomp n' stomp cd sampler vol. 4" (Estrus) Killer sampler with some of my favorite bands, including Federation X, Gas Huffer, Midnight Evils, Mummies, and Fatal Flying Guilloteens.

Eugene "the 4 track demos" (no label) Eu-genius!

The Evil Queens "First It Boils, Then It Spills" (Addison 27 Ludlow St. ste 4 NYC 10002) Heavy nasty rock that made this queen scream.

The Ex "Singles.Period." (Touch and Go POB 25520 Chicago IL 60625) This brilliant act/collective/superhero team is represented here with a collection of real singles in every sense. Meaning, the songs are so good it's as if they were trying to craft hit singles and so interesting that they are mighty as indie/punk singles. Over the course of this diverse comp one experiences funky bass, stuttery no wave, the echoey heist soundtrack "Gonna Rob Me a Spermbank," proto-hip hop, big weird rock, and more. Ex-cellent!

Excepter "Throne" (Load POBox 35 Providence RI 02901) Ambi-bent.

Jad and David Fair "Six Dozen Cookies (Friends and Relatives POB 23 Bloomington IN 47402) The Fairs are back together and they are talking about their Grampa. That's pretty much the gist of it. I wish I could tell you more, but that's about it.

Faust "friespiel" (Klangbad) An album of Faust dance remixes that made my brain swirl. I mean, Faust is Faust enough without the Residents re-Fausting it! Pretty awesome.

Charlie Feathers with Bubba Feathers "Live in Paris, France February 28, 1987" (Peepin' Eyes 2550 Fairbrook

Cove Hornlake, MS 38637) If you never got to see Charlie Feathers perform in his lifetime (and that would make most of us), here's a reminder of why he is called The King of Rockabilly. This is not a mistake-free, Dolby digital quadraphonic sound Robert Gordon backed by The Brian Setzer Orchestra in concert at The House of Blues. It IS a fan's tape (generously donated to Charlie's kids, the too cool for words Wanda and Bubba, along with Ricky, whom I've never met, but I'm sure he's just as cool), a fascinating Rock n' Roll moment, preserved for posterity, and cleaned up as much as possible. Charlie performs some of his greatest sides (How does "Stutterin' Cindy," "One Hand Loose," "Bottle To The Baby," "Get With It," and "Tongue Tied Jill" sound FOR A START?!), with a pure Rockabilly band led by number one son, Charles (better known as "Bubba"), one of the genre's most underappreciated guitarists (though I think that's going to change, as he's been turning in ace appearances at the Shreveport and Green Bay festivals, where he was heard to say "That three-chord shit those new bands are playin' ain't no damn Rockabilly!" Well said). The rhythm section of Colin Mee on drums (from The Skip Rats Trio) and "Beefy" from The Sidekicks on bass know how to "git with it" and play it with fillin'." Charlie sounds delighted to play before so many true fans, and he's in great voice (even though he apologizes for getting a bit hoarse), whether it's on a slow Country side like "Too Much Alike" or " I Forgot To Remember To Forget" or a rocker like "When You Come Around," or Charlie's distinctive version of "Roll Over Beethoven," which compelled Lux Interior to say, "It'll make you think you're hearing the song for the first time." The same is true when Feathers gets around the (lately) over-covered "Folsom Prison Blues." It's no surprise that the song's author made his last statements here on Earth count, one of which was, "I am, and always have been, a Charlie Feathers fan." Both great men left behind a lasting legacy, one that they're no doubt building on, today. Thunderstorms in The South could just be Charlie bringing slapback to heaven.

Federation X "Rally Day" (Estrus POB 2125 Bellingham WA 98227) Fed X is a genius band because they aren't actually any one genre. They definitely are heavy and nasty and powerful, but they aren't metallic or stoner-ish or garage-y. Rather, they just make this powerful rock music that stays cohesive and impactful, but never lets the listener get lazy – you just don't know what's coming next. This is one of the really killer bands out there.

Fine China "The Jaws of Life" (Common Wall) This is fine.

Fivestar Riot "unfamiliar Sky" (fivestrriot.com) Five stars. Out of Seven.

Fizzle Like A Flood "Golden Sand and the Grandstand" (ernest jenning) This is clearly a concept album, but I can't follow the story (is the horse singing, or the jockey? Who's in love? What do the tomatoes have to do with anything?). But as far as sounding like a bizarre, epic, wonderful mess of talking kiddie music stories mixed with lush drama pop mixed with sensitive indie mixed with freak-out rock, it all makes perfect sense. This Sizzles like a Steak!

The Fleshtones "Beachhead (Yep Roc POB 4821 Chapel Hill, NC 27515) Thirty year old bands aren't supposed to have a great album in them. Garage rock bands aren't supposed to get better; it goes against retro-laws. So explain why this album has some of the finest Fleshtones songs ever, especially the super catchy "Pretty, Pretty, Pretty." Produced by Rick of Southern Culture on the Skids and Jim Diamond (two dudes who know how to get the sound) , this is just a killer album that you will listen to a hundred times minimum. The Zarem-best!

Flyleaf (Octone) Worst singing ever.

FM Bats "Everybody Out...Shark in the Water" (Vinyl Dog/TKO) minimal attitude punk that Fucking Made me Batty!

Freakwater "Thinking of You" (Thrill Jockey) Seemingly pretty country-type music gets infused with creepiness as those moody-music-meisters Califone sit in with these friendly Freaks.

The Freddie Stready 5 "Freddie Steady Go!" (Fat Pete, www.fatpete com, www.nonerds.com/krc, freddiesteady@soaustin.net) Explosives/Roky Erickson/Shakin' Apostles/Jerry Jeff Walker, etc. drummer and sometimes singer and songwriter, Freddie Krc (Pron."Kerch", Eastern Europe, buy a vowel, already) returns with a project done solely in the spirit of fun, a celebration of Texas Rock n' Roll from the Sixties, ranging from the obvious ("Wooly Bully," "Treat Her Right," "I Fought The Law,") to the not so obvious ("I Can Beat Your Drum," a early non-LP side by The Fever Tree, "I Want You To Know" by The Promarks, and The Sherwoods' "I Know You Cried"). Freddie handles drums, guitar AND harmonica with equal aplomb, and is aided by his frequent co-conspirator, Cam King, and the rest of The Freddie Steady 5, who've been shakin' things up in and around Austin for some time. The Bulldogs, featuring JB De Los Santos, who played in a band with Krc when the latter was only ten years old, also round things out with two great numbers. Freddie particularly shines on a macho reading of "96 Tears" (comparable to Roy Head at his moody best) and the Psychedelic stomp of the aforementioned Sherwoods, Promarks and Fever Tree sides, but he digs a little deeper with a rocked up take on "The In Crowd," a song I've generally avoided like the "In Crowd" itself, but Freddie keeps it steady on a rocky road. Speaking of Roky, The 13th Floor Elevators are amply represented here with a "You're Gonna Miss Me" that's not a screamer, but, still a steamer. "Splash 1" is handled beautifully, though The Clique, who had a regional hit with their cover of The Elevators' classic, is listed here as the original recording artist(?). "I Fought The Law" and "Not Fade Away" sound like The Crickets SHOULDA sounded when I caught them recently in Green Bay. To round out this soiree, we've also got the Moving Sidewalks' (Billy Gibbons before his conversion...oh, yeah, he's not Orthodox! My mistake) classic, "99th Floor," The Five Americans' Monkeesque smash, "Western Union" (i'd have done the savage "Don't Blame Me" or even "I See The Light," but nuts to what I think), the great early Death Rocker, "The Angry Sea" by The Vibrations, not to mention a very cool "Candy Man" (you should have to sign a waiver stating that you CAN sing before covering a Roy Orbison song, but, Krc needn't fear repercussions. The Big "O" would approve). To paraphrase the late, great Doug Sahm, "Too much! It's a stone groove! Woo!" I mean, "You just can't play Texas music if you don't have a lot of soul," so, get on this soulful train! Incidentally, Freddie has also just been inducted (along with The 13th Floor Elevators) into The Texas Music Hall of Fame. Mazeltov, y'all.

Tom Fuller "Chasing An Illusion" (Redcap) 70s singer-songwriterish stuff meets pop-ish 80s college indie rock. And they say, "How do you do?" to each other.

Funeral Diner "The Underdark" (Alone POB 3019 Oswego NY 13126)This is pummeling and pretty at the same time. One could say it's pretty pummeling.

Gang of Four "Return the Gift" (V2) The recently re-formed act re-records old tracks in somewhat funkier, bouncier incarnations, making listenrrs funk and bounce. Unless they are the record collectors who like Gang of Four, because they are incapable of either bouncing or dancing.

Gasgiant (Elektrohasch) More gigantic than gassy! This is sludgy stoner music that will cloud your brain. But I still stand by my original statement, as a cloud isn't really a "gas" when it's a metaphorical cloud.

Gas Huffer "Lemonade For Vampires" (Estrus) Gas Huffer was the band that all the great 90s garage revival bands cited as the best band, and the fact they aren't really a garage revival band makes them that much better. This album at times recalls the Beasts of Bourbon, the Monkees, and most importantly, that one Gas Huffer album you love.

Gays in the Military "People is Beautiful" (Gulcher) Simply the filthiest, most decrepit mess ever to pass for punk-esque rock this millennium. That said, I can't stop listening to this absurd audio vomitation! "Evil Physician/Evil Position" is not only my favorite new song, but I started an online petition to make it the opening theme song to NBC's must-see-TV hit *Scrubs*. So gay...yet so good.

Gearhead magazine ($4.95 POB 421219 SF, CA 94142) This hot rock and hot rod mag is back with a killer 30 page Ed "Big Daddy" Roth tribute. You owe it to Rat Fink to get this.

The Geezers "freeburn" (no label) The best political novelty trombone punk CD ever!

Gene Defcon "throw up and die" (Retard Disco POB 461163 LA, CA 90046) This dude is crazy awesome wheter he's "Rockin' Your Bones" or declaring "Yesses and Nose." Lo fi disco is awesome because high end disco is pretty cheap to make anyhow these days, so super cheap disco is super excellent.

"Generations – A Hardcore Compilation" (Revelation POB 5232 Huntington Beach, CA 92615) This is actually an awesome hardcore comp because it's a bunch of new bands that believe in sounding like 80s hardcore , especially Go It Alone, Lights Off, Lion of Judah, Snake Eyes, Righteous Jams, Mind Eraser and Fucked Up. However a little innovation is sometimes welcome, as when Robot Whales actually make sounds like robotic whales.

"Get Outta Phily – Rock And Roll From The City of Brotherly Love" compilation (Tick Tick Tick 1324 S. 9th St. Phila PA 19147) Best bands: Thee Minks, The party Wreckers, Toothless George One Man Band. Worst band: None of them! Philly these nuts!

Ghost Writer/Wailin' Elroys split ep (Rock N Roll Purgatory POB 771153 Lakewood OH 44107) The Texan one man band Ghostwriter is a classic 1MB in that he uses foot percussion, hollow-body guitar, and harmonica in the tradition of the great blues buskers, but he also draws from psychobilly (and psycho killers) to create music so intense you would get arrested or institutionalized if you tried to play this on the streets. One man bands are always great just by virtue of being one man bands, but the chilling, ugly, haunting sounds this haint creates go beyond the novelty of the presentation. The Elroys have the disadvantage of being an actual multi-person band. But they still are pretty good! Actually, these ultra-twangy rockabilly numbers have some serious moonshine kick to them, and I would love to be in the same honkytonk as these tonkin' honkeys.

The Gimmies "Phonic Souls" (Dionysus) Detroit trash via Japan that makes sushi out of your eardrums. Heavy, explosive awesomeness!

Girl Friday "swimmer" (Get Fresh) Forget Good Friday, this is a GREAT Friday! Song-arific!

go ask ogre – letters from a deathrock cutter by jolene siana (Process) One of the problems with stereotypes is that they are based on truth. Some Jews actually are thrifty, OK? Many Canadians actually say "Eh?" That said, this journal-like book by a Goth girl at superficial first glance may seem absurdly cliché. The way she discusses her depression, inner turmoil, love for Industrial darkwave music, and various aspects of angst seem like someone making fun of teen girls could have written it. Naming the book after Go Ask Alice, a notoriously bogus teen diary from the 70s also contributes to that. But a close read reveals the sincerity, heart and realness of this book. Not a diary per se, but a series of fan letters sent from a Skinny Puppy superfan to the band's leader (and saved, and eventually returned, by Mr. Ogre), this book is about teen trauma (jolene becomes a "cutter," physically abusing her body even after making responsible decisions about drug use-restraint) and about how real music is to young people. Though the heroine actually establishes a relationship of sorts with her hero/pen pal, you imagine that even with no feedback Jolene would still get guidance and inspiration and strength from this band who, frankly, kind of sucks. But I'm not a teen Goth girl from a broken rustbelt home. At the minimum this is a healthier read for teens than Alice, and considering the ridicule Goths are held up to, this could be an important book for grown folk who want to understand.

"Godfathers of L.A. Punk" compilation (Siamese Dogs) I guess you could say Iggy, Max Lazer, the Controllers, the Weasels, the Attitude and Nu Americans are godfathers of L.A. punk, if you want to be totally wrong.

The Golden Boys "Scorpion Stomp #2" (Hook or Crook 4219 Tanglewood Trail Spring Branch, TX 78070) Fuzzed out guitar rawk from Texas that is southern and nasty and barbecue sauce slathered.

Holly Golightly "My First Holly Golightly Album," "On the Fire" ep (Damaged Goods) Ms. Golightly is a genius because she has spent the last decade lighting up the garage/rockabilly scene without ever losing her cool.

There's no psychobilly freakouts, wild rave-ups, or musical explosions here. Just a too-cool, minstrelsy-free take on the blues with a country tinge. Her full-length compilation album has album tracks from throughout her [redacted] (she had a singles comp already) that have become live faves. The cool consistency is awesome, and it continues with her new ep, which has a killer Willie Dixon cover as a bonus track.

Go Metric zine (801 Eagles Ridge Road Brewster NY 10509) Everyone knows that if there's one thing that Roctober advocates it's the metric system, so we have been longtime fans of this goofy music mag. The new issue is their best ever, by a kilometer!

Eli Good "Bride of the Bull" (feast or famine) I Lie (if I say I think this is) Good

Goon Moon "I Got a Brand New Egg Layin' Machine" (Suicide Squeeze POP 80511 Seattle WA 98108) Dark, strange, disturbing, delightful pleasant nightmare music.

Goribor "Krug u ocima," "Stari radovi" (Listen Loudest) GoriBEST!

The Grass Roots "Where Were You When I Needed You" (Rev-Ola) A deluxe reissue of the Grass Roots debut, a true West Coast folk/country rock classic, is made way worth it by the inclusion of demos and single versions. P.F. Sloan fans rejoice, this has some of his best work. Sure, the artifice and hokeyness of the genre is intact, but if you dig it, then this is the source!

The Grates "The Ouch, The Touch" (Dew Process) `Nice drumming, sexy singing...great!

Greenzine zine by Cristy C. Road (POB 42868 Philadelphia PA 19101, microcosmpublishing.com) While the combination of handwriting, typewriter font and Xerox-style printing (actually offset, I think) may bring to mind a personal diary zine, this is a lot more than that, as Road has created diary entries/short stories/fiction/truth for dozens of characters who are all experiencing change. While I like the writing (and am excited by a form of prose so heavily influenced by d.i.y. zine writing-style) it is Road's drawings that make this book special. Related to Jessica Abel's best work, these portraits are expressive, nuanced and enchanting. I am incredibly impressed by the delicate linework that results in dense work with real volume. Highly recommended.

the gregg yeti "the enders mind," "a 32 branched candelabra of evil" (koala syndicate pob 35070 Syracuse NY 13235) Indie-rific!

The Groovers "Undergroove" (Blood Red POB 12549 Portland OR 97212) Well-named, as this band actually does seriously groove. Franco-Garage rock that is so good I suspect one guy in the band may be Jordy grown up. Too often international Garage is more by-the-numbers than American stuff, as 60s-recreationists seem to thrive in Europe. But this band is actually original, fresh, fun and dance-inducing while remaining gloriously as Garage-raw as the genre requires.

Hackensaw Boys "Love What You Do" (Nettwerk) Old-timey mountain music that's not afraid to mention video arcades and sorority row. This is sure nice to listen to and the lyrics are awful funny, except when they're moving and serious. You should mosey somewhere and fetch a bucket of H-Boys.

The Happy Bullets "the Vice and Virtue Ministry" (Undeliable) They don't sound too happy.

The Hatepinks "Plastic Bag Ambitions" (TKO 8941 Atlanta Ave #505 Huntington Beach CA 92646) These French trash/garage/new wave/pop/punk/glam/goof/genius rockers make some of the most ridiculously nasty fun music this side of the Louvre. That's what I call a French tickler!

"Hazy Dreams (Not Just) A Jimi Hendrix Tribute" (Koch) P-Funk, Ice T and several Guns and/or Roses get together with some Italians to give Jimi's perfect, timeless tunes that modern update they so desperately needed. Thank you!

Healthy White Baby (broadmoor records) Danny Black of the Blacks has been tearing up the town with this band that combines the best aspects of being healthy (the ability to keep drinking liquor without dying) and being white (access to mom's country and 60s and 70s rock albums).

Jesse Hector "Gorilla Garage" (RPM) Boy is this unbelievably good. Going in reverse chronological order this tells the tale of a garage/glam/rockabilly/mod/power rock superhero. His 90s Toerag recordings (especially the amazing "Carolina") [redacted] killers, but the bulk of this is about the 70s where Hector's bands (most notably the Hammersmith Gorillas a/k/a The Gorillas) made proto-punk rock n roll that was a chunky [redacted] Cream, but raw and rough where Clapton's crew was slick and pro. Ending with Hector's awesome, legit 1960 teenage rockabilly single this CD indisputably establishes the greatness and significance of Jesse.

Jimi Hendrix and The Isley Brothers (Akarma, www.akarmarecords.com) So, I'm in a record store a few years ago, and I hear something that sounds a lot like Ronnie Isley backed by a pre-fame Jimi Hendrix. Now, it's a fact that Hendrix played guitar with The Isleys in his Chitlin Circuit days, but I'd never heard anything about them recording together. Turns out there was an LP on Buddah that was released shortly after Jimi's death, and ordered to be pulled immediately by his family, making it even more rare than the famed Hendrix/Jim Morrison "Fuck her in the ass!" tapes were before they saw legit release in the early 80s. Well, it's available again, though I couldn't tell you for how long, or if Ronnie and his brothers even cut this with Jimi in the same room. It seems probable that Ronnie's vocals, and possibly even the rhythm section, were added on later (people weren't saying things like "I'm just freakish about dancing" too much in the early 60s), but, you know what? Who gives a shit, this sounds great! Check it out while you can.

The Hekawis "Intellectuals" (Wild Eagle) Trashy blues garage that sounds like a drunk fell on an electric organ and liked the way it sounded so stayed drunk. In other words, good as Hek!

Matthew Herbert "Plat DU Jour" (accidental) Using found audio of actual food or food to be (thousands of doomed chickens on one track) Herbert has crafted playful electronic goofiness that sounds like incidental music in a children's show, or happy, strange video game music in a more pleasant world where instead of killing people in videos you ate delicious bread.

Hey Willpower (Cochanrecords.com) The thing about indie-would-be top 40 R&B dance music (a la Har Mar Superstar, and this) is that it inevitably makes the Justin Timberlakes and R. Kelly's and Gwen Stefanis seem more brilliant rather than undressing them. This is pretty fun, but not nearly as good in any way as the radio bubblegum it riffs on.

Gary Higgins "Red Hash" (Drag City) Higgins is more folk than psyche, and because of Drag City reissuing this rarity I was expecting Red Krayola or Ghost or something mind expanding. And the guy looks so freaky cool, and a little crazy, that I had high expectations. But he turned out to be very sane and this is a very dull record. Even the unreleased sperm whale track isn't interesting, and songs about sperm and/or whales are almost always good.

The High Dials "War of the Wakening Phantoms" (Rainbow Quartz 440 9th Ave 8th Fl suite 36 NYC 10001) If you like awesome, upbeat, 60s-influneced pop that balances precious lushness with a rhythmic sense of immediacy than introduce yourself to this band. Just walk up and say, "Hi, Dials!"

Hip Hop Time Capsule –The Best of RETV – 1993 (MVD) This is better than their previous DVD, which boxed the vintage videos in frames. This DVD has lots of clips from a 90s hip hop cable access show (it was Jersey based, so Naughty By Nature is well represented) as well as an odd selection of videos from the day (including Prince Markie D, Paris, Onyx and Da Youngstas. The absolute highlight here is an interview with Boss, who I recall had an underground hit at the time called something like "I Don't Give A Fuck" (another video of hers is featured, as there were [redacted] cursing videos made in 1993). She demonstrates her not-fuck-giving by cleaning off a pop can during the interview, then wordlessly deferring a question to her DJ when the can is ready, then from off-camera kicking her boots up [redacted] the table in front of the interviewer to drink. Also notable is the strain of intentional and unintentional self-parody as Dre (with his comical Eazy E impersonator), Chris Rock(in *CB4*, a visit to the premiere and an interview with Charlie Murphy is included) and [redacted] the absurdist video 'Gangsta Bitch" by Apache all make gangsta rap seem ridiculous.

Hipbone Slim & the Knee Tremblers "Have Knees Will Tremble" (Voodoo Rhythm) Slim is a member of the Headcoats Mafia, which meuns not only do you get Holly Golightly singing on the record and the great Toe Rag production sound, but also that the music will capture the spirit of all time teenage rockabilly without any cartoonish posturing or histrionics. Rather you get some straightforward swampy rockin' tunes to swing your baby around to. Its hip to be boned!

Hiretsukan "End States" (G7 Welcoming Committee) Killer melodic hardcore with screaming, ragged, horrifying female vocals that will remind you of something you might hear just before your crazy girlfriend burns all your clothes. Man I need some new clothes.

Walter Hnot's Acoustics "Freakin' Fresh" (waltehnotsacoustics.com) Hnot too interesting.

Hockey Night "Keep Guessin" (Lookout) This Hockey Night will leave the ice un-Zamboni-able due to excessive, uncontrollable dance mayhem!

Niall James Holohan "A Beautiful Corpse" (niallJamesholohan.com, 293 Bushy Park Apartments, Templeogue Road, Terenure, Dublin 6,the Republic of Ireland) Too often a bedroom band solo artist is either dreary or singer-songwriter-y. Niall (the self-professed "Dark Prince of Pop," though I suspect he's a few shades lighter than Prince) is an exception, making music that's joyously innovative and bubbly even as it explores dark and sad topics. Always quirky and unusual, all the songs on this CD [redacted] different and good. I Niall before your greatness!

The Holograms "Night of 1000 Ex-Boyfriends' (Teenacide pob 291121 LA CA 90029) OK, I'm convinced that these purveyors of bouncy punkish fun are all pretty good looking ladies. But I'm not convinced they are actually bad or tough or nasty despite (predictable) lyrics to the contrary.

Hopewell "...& the Birds of Appetite" (Tee Pee) Regal psychedelia that got high [redacted] studying.

Howling Diablos "Car Wash" (Alive) Damn it's bluesy in here!

Human Eye (In The Red) Monster movie punk that grabs you like a hand out of a grave. This is the kind of punk that sounds like it was made in the 70s and then picked up speed and power for 30 years. EYE love it!

Humor Can Be Funny (second editon) (Alternative Comics) Waymon review (second edition): Sam Henderson deconstructs humor, like Mark Newgarden does in his comics, yet unlike his fellow deconstuctionsits, it's still knee slappingly chuckle inducing. This compiles the early years of The Magic Whistle comic, and it is indeed magical. No one can draw penis noses like Sam!

Hypnos 69 "The Intrigue of Perception" (Electrohasch) Hip nosed!

Illinois First! "Songs About the Land of Lincoln" (illinoisfirstband.com) This may not be the only Illinois history lesson set to rock n roll music album that came out in the last year, but it's the rockingest! "Rock Island" rocks!

Impotent Sea Snakes "Live in Wacken Germany (MVD) Those Germans sure love depravity, and America's armpit of depravity, Florida, delivers it to them in the form of this dull porno-deviant-theatrical rock group. I love big shows and costumes, but I've always found the Snakes dull (and I've been seeing them for at least a dozen years…they may be 20 years old as a band by now). At least the Genitorturers have that super-woman as a centerpiece, this is just boring, pseudo-shocking rock n sex clichés acted out without a real hook. That said, Germany and Florida, you deserve each other!

Indian Jewelry "in love with loving" ep (On/On Switch) If robots (and I mean the classic kind of robot capable of evil and yearning to learn how to love) made psychedelic music, they could only pray to their cyber-deity that it would sound this good.

Induce "cycle" (Wondersound) Induced sleep.

Intelligence "Icky Baby" (In The Red) Damaged noisy art-rock versions of cheers the pep squad would do in high school.

Innaway (Some 345 7th Ave 24th Fl. NYC 10001) Semi-ambient lounge music with classic rock tendencies. Makes more sense hearing than describing.

Instant Camera "Alive on Departure" (Wall to Wall 1403 and a half E. Breckenridge St Louisville KY 40204l) Instant classic! Better than instant coffee! If robots had soul they would make this kind of futuristic surf/garage/pop/new wave music.

Int'l Shades (Cass 3424 Bishop Detroit MI 48224) Bob Bert's new, dignified band makes the Knoxville Girls sound like syphilis-mad pirates. This is too mature and indie for my course, semi-retarded tastes.

Invisible Surfers (Katakouzinou 12, 10677 Athens, Greece) Unlike most boring, cliché surf music, this band stands out because, while staying true to the beach, they also draw from indie rock, jazz and ethnic folk music. Of course, the latter may not be a stretch, they say Dick Dale's Middle-Eastern roots helped contribute to the sounds of early surf. These Invisibles may not be much to see, but they are really something to hear.

Ion Dissonance "Solace" Beyond brutal.

Irritators "Family Values" demo ($3 ppd, c/o Mark POB 173 Granville, MA 01034) Pounding trash punk that more than irritated, it genuinely infected.

Isobella "surrogate emotions of the silverscreen" (new Grenada, newgrenada.com) Isaboring.

Ja dj zdena "lebe I tvojima" (Slusaj Najglasnije) The Crioatian Shooby Taylor!

Jakarta Skyscraper (Tart Garage) If your head is like mine you've heard music like this during scary dreams that make you wet your bed.

Mikki James "Guess What…" (Xemu) Never trust the spelling"Mikki."

Jandek "Glasgow Sunday," "Raining Down Diamonds," (Corwood POB 15375 Houston TX 77220). **"Down In A Mirror – A Second Tribute to Jandek"** (Summersteps) Sadly, I am missing the Jandek U.S. live shows, but I have the "Glasgow Sunday" live CD of his Euro live debut, and it gives me a lot to ponder. Hearing pro-rockers accompany Jandek while staying true to his vision removed some of the rawness but also made his abstract, dirge-ish compositions seem more solid and impressive in some ways. Speaking of which, volume 2 of the Jandek tribute series has been released, and though some artists (like John Darnielle, surprisingly) do Jandek recreationism, others like Live Show Rabbits groove it up, which is a fun way to approach the J. Bigger names on this CD than Vol. 1, as Jeff Tweedy, Six Organs of Admittance and the great Dan Melchior weigh in. But all the attention hasn't gone to Jandek's head. His new album "Raining Down Diamonds" is as minimal, low, and spooky as ever. Jandek Forever!

The January Taxi "keep quiet, they might hear us" (Vacant Cage 2557 Oakhill Dr Murfreesboro TN 37130) All hail this Taxi!

Jason Farrell "Celophane" b/w "Second Guess Your Pharmacist" (Corleone) The past ten years of pop punk (and it's weird cousin, emo) have almost made you forget that you could make bouncy, hook-laden music that actually feels like there is some danger and genuine life-damaged heart behind it. Two songs later, I remember said fact again.

The Jessica Fletchers "less sophistication" (Rainbow Quartz 440 9th Ave. 8th Fl suite 36 NYC 10001) Sexy 60s style pop that taught me to love again!

J4 "Feeling Normal" (LOL Records) Better than that awful Matchbox 20 band, but not much different from them.

J-Henry "another long day" (Rockview) American with a Tom Petty feel that should make Americans who aren't petty feel inspired.

Tiff Jimber "Obstacles" (Cormac 820 Bay St. #4 Santa Monica CA 90405) Shivered my jimbers!

Joe & Bing "daybreak" (Rev-Ola) I'm a big fan of Rev-Ola reissues, but I don't get what is supposed to make this soft rock album from 1971 sound any less dreadful than any of its brethren.

John Wilkes Booze "Telescopic Eyes Glance The Future Sick" (KRS) Psychedelic soul people twist, destroy, groove, pass over to the other side of, and recontextualize " the funky place." This is definitely badass. But it is also definitely for and by the good asses.

Johnny Casino's Easy Action "We've Forgotten More Than You'll Ever Know" (Steel Cage) Soulful party garage rock from an Aussie/Philly hybrid band featuring the Cosmic Commander, making this the least pummeling, freshest, happiest Confederacy of Scum-related record ever. This will make you do all kinds of crazy dances.

Johnny Cock and the Nuts "Tear You a New One" (Bitch Slap POB 952 Grover Beach CA 93483) This Cock festers and drips with venereal rock disease! A Jello impersonation that tastes like semen-flavored gelatin.

Jook "different class" (RPM) This fine release brings to light these lost glam heroes. Ready to look to blues rather than campy 50s rock, they actually made some of the finest songs of their fine-song era. Get Jooked!

journal song zine #6 (Microcosm) This is the most journal zine-looking journal zine you'll ever experience. And the writer, Steve, is aware that he is a zine vet who has moved forward, yet lost the energy from his zine youth. This looks great, with all typewritten text, expert xerography that makes everything look raw and d.i.y, yet is extremely clear and easy to read. My fave part of this is a brief history of the Goya bean and rice company.

J plus J plus J "They Hump While We Go Nuts" (Johann's Face/Circle Machine 427 N Larch Ave Elmhurst IL 60126) Super amazing awesome ultra good kiddie rock electronic dance music about school, the mall, sandwiches and snow. And some stuff in polish, which apparently is the new Japanese. If this blippy bloopy record was any blippier or bloopier I'd Blop!

The Juan McClean "Less Than Human" (Astralwerks/DFA) Six Finger Satellite were pioneers in the Providence, Rhode Island movement to get rock music as fucked up as possible. Amazingly, one of the fingers on that Satellite now returns with a mission to un-fuck dance music. This CD's disco is a s strong as a ninja's fighting technique. This is number Juan in my book!

Judge "What It Meant: The Complete Discography" (Revelation POB 5232 Huntington Beach CA 92615) Late 80s NYC hardcore always struck me as a meathead, bullying, humorless scene (as apposed to Boston, which had a meathead, bullying scene that wore hockey uniforms, which is almost humorous) . The scene had some standouts whose records were awesome despite meatheadism, but Judge was not one of them. Listening to this it's clear that though they didn't suck,(they knew how to play better than a lot of Midwest h/c bands) still, they were no fun and not too inspiring.

Jumpsuit "Regret" (makeorbreakrecords.com) Made me jump with joy and bring suit against my neighbors who imposed a moratorium on music after 9pm. Indie pop that balances melodies and fun (time machine themes abound) with a kind of dreary undercurrent that makes it seem deep.

"Just Go Destroy Everything In Sight!" compilation (Dionysus POB 1975 Burbank CA 91507) This contemporary Japanese punk, garage, new wave, manic wackiness comp is a gas, with tons of bands you never heard of doing originals and (I think) a few covers (like Google-A doing "What A Way to Die"). Best of the batch are the Have Nots, the Faceful, the Volume Out, and Baby Mongoose. The Gimmees, who have their own killer full length on Dionysus, also appear

The Kallikak Family "May 23 2007" (tell-all) Kallikick ass! If ambient story-scapes can kick ass, that is.

Karate Party "Black Helicoptor" (S-S 1114 21st St. Sacramento CA 95814) This reissues an obscure 7" from 1997 and a bunch of unreleased tracks by this lo-fi inside out punk band. This act had the herky-jerky spasms of math rock if the math in reference involved bad arithmetic. An inspiration for the A-Frames, this gold vinyl LP is definitely a lost treasure, especially if you treasure messes.

Katy Mae "The Lightning and the Sun" (Maggadee POB 666 Hoboken NJ 07030) Americana-wannabe

The Kennedys "Half A Million Miles" (Appleseed POB 2593 West Chester PA 19380) I just discovered that despite being very annoyed by this schmaltzy singer-songwriter duo, I have enough restraint not to make a Lee Harvey Oswald joke. But I also learned that it was the first thing that came to my mind, so I'm not proud of myself.

Khanate "Capture and Release" (Ideologic) This is like being v-e-r-y slowly crushed to death between two massive boulders

Khierstin "Lost In This" (KS Management) I wish luck and success to everyone, but this would-be rock vocal diva made a fucking awful CD and I hope this kid considers college. A cover of "Wicked Game?" Ouch.

"Kicked Out Of Purgatory" compilation (Hairball 8) Seemingly hundreds of awesome psychobilly bands appear on this jam-packed comp. Guana Batz, Demon City Wreckers, Deadbolt and Phantom Rockers are the best.

"Kicksville! Volume Three" compilation (Norton Box 646 cooper Station NY 10276) Forget obscure singles comps, Norton releases non-existent singles comps! These are pre-Beatles (some *very* pre-) non-issued acetates by mostly unknowns (though a presumably teenaged Gary Usher rockabilly tune that sounds like it was recorded in an outhouse is a highlight), and they are raw gems. The overall effect of hearing these great, spare, unfamiliar songs, almost all are echo-drenched, is that you are at a high school hop at an all-ghost high school. Also, Jerry Arnold and the Rhythm Captain's "Slewfoot Sue" is the best slewfoot song EVER!

Kid Icarus "The Metal West" (Summersteps) This is buzzworthy because its fuzz is worthy! The Kid loses me on the slow stuff, but the upbeat rock is 1/2 creepy and 1/2 inspiring and 1/2 something else. I better check my math.

Killer's Kiss (Hook or Crook 4219 Tanglewood Trail Spring Branch TX 78070) Nasty garage with killer (thus the name) guitar sounds that distort me to heaven.

Kill The Hippies "Erectrospective" (Rick N Roll Purgatory POB 771153 Lakewood OH 44107) If you don't have any of this absurdist Ohio punk band's singles or cassettes now you can enjoy their fruits,with this ridiculous, awesome 77 track double CD. Like an American hardcore-influenced Toy Dolls, KTH always seems too fast, too off kilter and too

silly to be really scary, yet they are so much of all of those things that they actually a scary good. This is one of the best CDs you will hear this year if you hear it.

Kilowatts "problem/solving" (artificial music machine, www.artificialmusicmachine.com) If my clock radio played this music I'd never wake up. Should be called "No Problem/Snoozing."

Carole King "The Living Room Tour" (Rockingale) When Carole opens this live album with the warning, "We'll be playing at ▪ reasonable volume here in my living room," you know you are in for a mature, mellow good time. Despite playing some of the best songs ever written (not just ever written by her, but *ever* written) in a wonderful, if imperfect, voice, her biggest applause of the night comes when she announces she's 62, so this is a crowd just happy to still be alive. OK, "Jazzman" is a very bad song, but I can listen to "Chains," "Pleasant Valley Sunday," and "You've Got A Friend" forever.

King Cat Comics and Stories comic by John Porcelino ($3, POB 170535 SF, CA 94117) This issue is John's moving obituary to his father and it is one of the best thing's he's ever done. Highly recommended.

King Automatic "Automatic Ray" (Voodoo Rhythm) This King is crowned the monarch of Blues Trash Punk Chaos. I loved this CD so much I think it may have impregnated me.

Kish "echoes in ▪ quiet church" (Slusaj Najglasnije) If you like introspective music, KISH is better than KISS.

The Kissers "Good Fight" (Skeptic Rock) A somewhat sober Cheesehead version of the Pogues, rocking the trad Irish sound. Politi-cool!

Knights of The New Crusade "My God is Alive! Sorry About Yours!" www.crusadenow.com, crusadenow@yahoo.com) I saw some preacher guy on T.V. the other night, and he had the melon-sized *cajones* to say, "Christians, generally, unlike Moslems, have not been responsible for starting wars, unless you want to bring up something stupid like The Crusades." Well, The Knights of The New Crusade are tearing off the cloth and putting on the armor! This digital chalice will burn two crosses on both cheeks of your life! Sinners such as yourselves should be grateful to even read this review, much less own the CD, which you should: it may be your ▬ absolution! The road to redemption is rocky enough (it hasn't been repaved since the King James Bible was just a rough draft), but the four horsemen have seen fit to drag you through it. Souls will Rock and heads will Roll! Rock n' Roll, you see, was God's gift by which true believers could convert the masses. It says so in the liner notes. Go down on your knees, and repent if you please! Though the guitars blare out in a manner reminiscent of Greg Ginn (WHY were Black Flag so great, again? I liked the "Jealous Again" EP and a few other pre-Rollins things, but I'll never know who died and made them God. It wasn't our Lord, Jesus Christ, that's for sure), the message is clear, that Rock ' n ' Roll was meant to instill the fear of God into various free thinkers, not as a soundtrack to hedonistic drug use and release of base sexual needs. Did they get through to me? Let's just say I'll be sleeping on my stomach for a while.

The Knuckleheads "Garage Soul Instrumentals" (Slusaj Najglasnije) A very descriptive title and a very nice execution of Jimmy Smith, Wailers, Shadows and Barkays tunes.

The Koffin Kats "Inhumane" (Hairball 8) These cats have so much Psychobility that they would give the Cramps cramps. Super fast, super wicked and super wicked fast nastiness that is as fun as trick or treating.

Scott Kovarik "Soul Possessions" (indiepad.com) This could be worse, but I'm not visionary enough to figure out how.

The Krunchies "In De Winkel" (Criminal IQ 3540 North Southport Ave. Chicago IL 60657) This record is so fucking dangerous that pregnant women shouldn't be allowed to hear it. This is garage punk in a blender. This is frappéd up!

Dennis Kyne "I'm Not Resisting" (denniskyne.com) Kyne continues to make some of the only protest music in response to what should be the most protest-able war ever. Keep up the good fight DK!

Label the Traitor "The Battle of the Common" (Five Point POB 230026 NYC 10023-0001) Should be called "Label this GREATER" because this is awesome hardcore!

Lazy Magnet "Initiate Rites of the Rabbit Magician" (Corleone POB 65 Providence RI 02901) The best comic book and 7" record set of the century, so far (the Cheer Accident one was a CD, and the music and comic didn't go together too good). Minimalist musical oddities copulate sublime animal comix to create ▪ story that may or may not make sense, but gets enough enchantment points to qualify as an official fable. The b-side had no comic and mentioned ▬ English muffin.

Rod Lee "Vol. 5: The Official" (Morphius) Lee's nasty hip hop features minimalist naughty beats and chants. "Shorties Fucking it Up" ain't no "Ass and Titties," but Lee still is in the DJ Assault ballpark when it comes to awesome dumb nastiness.

The Legendary Hucklebucks "Rattle All Night Long And Shake You!" (Rock & Roll Purgatory POB 771153 Lakewood OH 44107) This is the best party record in the history of parties!

Let's Get Out of this Terrible Sandwich Shop "Hatchet" b/w "Misery Tomb" (Mimosa) If you think guns and axes and weird melodies are funny...then you're right! A delicious audio sandwich despite the shop's shortcomings.

lewis and clark "bare bones and branches" (Summersteps POB 447 Moscow PA 18444) This lewis and Clark did a great job exploring my boredom.

Light The Fuse compilation (Out of the Loop POB 222 tuart hill W.A. Australia 6938) A three band comp of rocking Australian garage-bar-rockers. The Fourstroke are a little heavy for my taste, with too dramatic singing, but the other two (M-16s and Volcanics) are both kick ass. Apparently some of these tracks are covers of Aussie punk classics, but I'm not familiar with the Bamboos or the Bakery. I'm not proud of my ignorance, but neither am I ashamed.

Los Natas "München sessions" (Elektrohasch POB 90 03 01 D-81503 Munschen Germany) Ultra epic slow motion Viking sword fight soundtracks.

The Love Hall Tryst "Song of Misfortune" (Appleseed) OK, John Wesley Harding wrote a song that he turned into a 19th century period novel that he now has supplemented with a sort-of soundtrack CD, of *a capella* harmonizin' of theoretical hits that would have been on the hypothetical best selling CD "Now That's What I call Music in 1830!" I never went to real college, so I was never assaulted by those odious *a capella* groups, but even if you were, the good news is that one of Harding's harmonizing buddies is the angel-voiced Kelly Hogan (the others are the also cherubic in their own ways Nora O' Connor and Brian Lohmannn). I'm not sure who this is for, but they will LOVE it whoever they are.

Lungfish "Feral Hymns" (Dischord) Full bushy beard on young white guy signifies supposed genius, but since this band must have been around 20 years old by now they aren't young, so that means the beard represents actual genius. And this album backs up the beard.

Johnny Maddox "Dixieland Blues" (Crazy Otto) The 50s Ragtime pianist/country music sideman extraordinaire gets a deluxe reissue of this rare album of Dixieland. And while I wanted to give a thorough historical overview/review, I think I can do better anecdotally. This CD almost made me have 3 car crashes. I don't know why, but the masterful, captivating arrangements here, and Johnny's amazing piano playing, actually put me into some bizarre trance, and I almost lost control of the steering wheel several times before I realized this fine album was the culprit. Needless to say, it's powerful stuff.

The Mad 3 "King Pyramid Special" (Rock N Roll Kingdom) Amazing EP in a pyramid shaped sleeve that combines instro-surf with instro devil music.

Mae "The Everglow" (Tooth and Nail) Maeby not.

Mahi Mahi "(Re)Move Your body" (Corleone) My my, Mahi Mahi! You make strange minimalist dance music so creepy and bloopy that I'm afraid to dance...but can't help myself!

The Makers "Everybody Rise!" (Kill Rock Stars) I've been kind to the Makers for a while because their first few records (other than the instrumental one) were so fucking good that they seemed like *the* key band in the 90s garage revival. But there were lineup changes along the way, and I think I probably pretended some of their recent output was better than it was because they had rock credit built up. Well this record really is the best one in years, with both a return to the impactful, wild early sound and an accomplished introduction of a softer pop sound on a few tracks. The hooks here a real, and the Makers are back to some serious makin'!

Making Stuff and DoingThings edited by Kyle Bravo (Microcosm) You probably need this book. Dozens of underground zinesters compile essays, diagrams and comix about how to do things and how things work that will explain how to compost, fix a toilet, make toothpaste, clothes, and root beer, take care of sick animals, understand how your penis works, organize your day, or create your own buttplug. Plus about a thousand more hints Heloise never gave out.

Man 2 Man "Male Stripper Box Set" (cdbaby.com) This quadruple CD-R box set includes most of the tracks on the Man 2 Man best of CD that came out a while back, but this also has an entire CD of remixes of the Hi-NRG classic "Male Stripper", including some amazing ones I've never heard before. That said, I wish there were notes explaining their sources. There's no real artwork on these CDs, but for $20 for four CDs it's a pretty great deal. There's also a Fast rarities CD-R on Cdbaby.com as well.

marah-mar (Scenster Credentials POB 1275 Iowa City, IA 52244) My hearing is too bad to even perceive this quiet music.

Marshmallow Overcoat "26 Ghosts: The Best of 1986-2005" (Dionysus) One of the only 80s garage psyche bands that didn't suck (I'm not a Midnight Records or Voxx fan) the 'Coat is honored here with a career retrospective which includes a bunch of songs that never dwell on 60s recreation, and even border on gothy at times. The DVD disc has live footage and other weirdness, all appropriately cheap looking and fun.

"Marty Thau Presents 2x5" compilation (Sanctuary) This reissues a mid-70s album that was basically released instead of 5 45s (the title refers to 2 songs each by 5 new bands). The only surviving band, The Fleshtones, sound great here, and you can hear why they have another 30 years in them. Their relationship to "Nuggets"-era garage rock is obviously genuine. On the other hand, the Bloodless Pharoahs, Brian Setzer's pre-Cats band, is awful, and apparently lifeless and soulless as well as bloodless. The remaining bands, The Revelons, The Comateens and the Student Teachers turn in pretty solid tunes here, marrying New Wave sounds with 60s pop in ways that could be better, but are pretty pleasant. Not an essential reissue, but an interesting period piece.

Matty Pop Chart "Good Old Water" (Friends and Relatives POB 23 Bloomington IN 47402) Dr. Demento version of the best un-labelled cassette you ever found of acoustic folk/world music. Nasal-rific!

Michael McDaeth "Shine In Reverse" (mcdaeth.com) Should be called Michael McDEATH because these songs are KILLER!

MC5 "Kick Out The Jams" DVD (Creem MVD) A beautiful film basically made up of the equivalent of home movies of MC5 performances edited together ■ an aesthetic triumph. This is as much about how beautiful amateur film can be as how amazing the MC5 were ■ stage (which they obviously were), and it's even about how awesome Michigan was back in the day. This is not a comprehensive documentary about the band (we all know how disastrous those can be,) this is just a short, sweet document of their awesomeness and beauty.

Adam McIntyre "Nothing Means Anything " (headphone treats) Adam is sensitive, talented and nice. I love him...and I fell in love because of his music. That's the power of this stuff!

Media Burn "Virtual Love" (Wrong Speed POB 843 Portage MI 49081-0843) Yecch. But not "yecch" without some merit. But still yecch.

Medications "Your Favorite People All In One Place" (Dischord) MediGREATions!

The Melvins "Mangled Demos from 1983" (ipecac POB 1778 Orinda CA 94563) Though the awesome, raw 80s hardcore tracks here are worth getting for their own gettingness, the selling point here is a live radio Christmas show the boys played at an Elks Lodge. It really demonstrates first of all that all good bands were into hardcore in 1983 and also that the heaviness came from Dale the drumber rather than Buzz, the leader, as these pre-Dale tracks are powerful but far from heavy.

Meneguar "I was born at night" (Magic Bullet) So life-changing they should be called Boyz II Meneguar.

Men's Recovery Project "The Best Of..." (5RC) I love that this is a "Best Of" rather than a retrospective. MRP are killer because they sound akin to noisy electronic damage music (*a la* Load Records) but they usually catch a real groove and all the supporting sounds help rather than work against said groove. Forty tracks sure to confuse.

Menthol Hill "disfigured five" (k-pod 3251 Kenneth Dr. LA, CA 90032) Country-infused slow pop that left me Menthol-elated!

Mest "Photographs" (Maverick) I'm not a huge fan of the pop-punk (now a bit post-pop punk) sound, but why shouldn't a Chicago band become the next big thing? This sounds more My Chemical Romantic than their last couple albums, I hope that works for them.

Paul Michel "These Are All Beautiful Things" (MagicBullet 17 Argyle Hills Dr. Fredericksburg VA 22405) A pure, insightful, earnest, heartfelt, post Brit-Pop singer songwriter. In other words, kind of boring.

Michelangelo "Future Perfect" (michaelangelomusic.com) Like Kenny G meets Joe Jackson, but better!

Mike and the Ravens "Nevermore" (Dionysus) This East Coast pre-Beatles teen garage band rocked the late 50s and early-60s with dozens of solid original tunes that miraculously were documented on acetates, recorded radio broadcasts and live events, and even a few legit 45 releases. It would be hyperbole to say they were groundbreaking pioneers, or brilliant songwriters whose work makes you re-access rock history, but on the other hand, this is one of the finest documents of a pure teenage band in the 50s and 60s writing original, fun music you'll get. Obviously these kids had the energy to keep writing and recording, as well as the drive to keep it together, and that magic is captured here is dozens of great tracks. There are a few snippets of extra historical audio to set the mood, and a lot of tracks on disc 2 that follow the Ravens to their post-teen dance band career (there's some Byrds-ism in these Ravens' futures), so this is really quite a musical narrative. Raven On, it's a crazy feeling!

Miles Away (Bridge Nine) Brutally melodic. Or Melodically brutal. Either way, it rules.

Milk n Cookies (RPM) Ramones-era New York-area garage-pop inspired rock that got too caught up in glam and wholesomeness to be considered punk. Which explains why this band is obscure despite being pretty absurdly awesome. Power poppers and punk goofsters should have loved these guys, they sound like the best tracks on both Max's comp LPs. But ■ usual, some of the best tracks on this CD reissue of their album are unreleased or b-side stuff, so their obscurity makes more sense. But if you like your underground music fey and fun you need to seek this out.

Mindflayer "Die and Mold" (Corleone POB 65 Providence R 02901) Part of the Providence apeshit noise explosion scene, Mindflayer don't so much flay here as filet. The knifework here still leaves the listener bloodied, but not quite as brutalized ■ on their previous releases. This album, especially the last movement, adds some subtlety to the chaos.

Thee Minks "Are You Ready Now?" (Steel Cage) There's ■ lot of girl garage acts, but none of them can hold a candle to these fur-loving females when it comes to singing. With raspy grit that makes Joan Jett sound like Luther Vandross, these ladies make every lyric sound naughty, world-weary and wild.

Minor Majority "Up For You and I" (Big Dipper) Fans of dreary rejoice!

Eugene Mirman "The Absurd Nightclub Comedy of..." (Suicide Squeeze) Mirman is definitely a decent comedian. His best material either is based in mildly surreal utterances or in somewhat amusing observation or recollection. As I've used "decent," "mildly" and "somewhat" already in this review, I guess I won't be nominating him for the comedy hall of fame.

"Misfits meet the Nutley Brass – Fiend Club Lounge" (Misfit Records) Unlike the 90s wave of fake lounge singing versions of punk songs (or *The Osbournes*' loungey theme song) these instrumentals that make exotica, py jazz, and lounge music out of Misfits songs is fun but not a joke. The joyful, inventive arrangements are really excellent, and the musicianship is top notch. But in addition to thr Nutley triumph, what makes this so good is the revelation of the poorly kept secret that Danzig wrote really great songs that hold up to orchestration (I bet you couldn't do this with Black Flag). Listen to this and you; I get an attitude; you'll get a *great* fucking attitude.

Miss Alex White and the Red Orchestra (In The Red) The princess of Chicago rock delivers an album as simple and rocking as AC/DC but as raw and real as how you remember punk seeming to be when you were 15. Her spare songwriting and husky voice and crudely brilliant hooks are bigger winners than that Mormon guy on *Jeopardy* last year.

Modey Lemon "The Curious City" (Birdman) This isn't a group of Psych Garage Recreationists dressing up like in pseudo 60s duds and aping clichés. These dudes just make songs that somehow sound perfectly awesome and mighty garage, psyche and, yes, even 60s-ish without bullshitting or retro-izing. This is the good stuff.

Moe's Haven (moeshaven.com) Moe, Larry...the cheese!

The Moggs "the white belt is not enough" (Absolutely Kosher 1412 10th St. Berkeley CA 94710) This is the kind of album that makes ■ hate music.

Mojo Gurus "Shakin' In The Barn" (Empire) I wouldn't have spent the last dozen years trying to cash rubber checks from this two-bit magazine if I wasn't dedicated to absurd, roots-based, wild rock n roll. But this record is just not hitting, the singer sounds more like Weird Al than Lux Interior and that buries this seemingly sincere swamp effort.

Mommy and Daddy "Duel at Dawn" (Kanine) A slick electronic dance-beat sound collides with something rough, seedy, sticky and punk and the result is a mommy and daddy that would definitely be the cool parents on the block who let you drink beer and watch Cinemax.

The Money "it's a shit business" (Wild Eagle POB 171 Sherwood qld 4075 Australia) Old fashioned 70s style bowery bar rock (in the Johnny Thunders tradition) meets Australian pub rock (in the get in a fist fight with a kangaroo tradition) and the result is on the Money!

Monster-O "...And Then There Were Zero" (Omega Point) Their fingers are on their blip-activating laptop mouses, but their hearts are in sweet pop punk. That's right, Monster-O may be a monster on the outside, but if you eviscerated him and saw his inside, then who would the real monster be?

Moonlight Towers "Like You Were Never There" (Spinster) Towering with majestic pop excellence.

Morcheeba "The Antidote" (Echo) God that's awful.

The Mormons "statement of no statement" (nickel and dime) Angular punk that sounds like a teenage Devo playing in their garage. Includes both a clone song and a karaoke song, so they certainly plan to take over the world.

Ennio Morricone "High – The trippier Side of the Morricone Genius" (Cherry Red) Instead of making you want to shoot a cowboy this music makes you want to make love to a 60s flight attendant! Morricone, you continue to amaze me!

Morricone Youth "Silenzio Violento" (Country Club) Though there name is ■ take on the Ciccone Youth LP, Sonic Youth's Madonna tribute, this album isn't related to either SY or Ms. Kubala. Rather, this is an act that exquisitely recreates soundtrack music. Here I think they hybrid-ize hundreds of real soundtracks into one original Spaghetti gangster spy action mystery movie score. I'd see the movie. And in some ways I have.

M.O.T.O. "Raw Power" (Criminal I.Q.) When Paul chants "2-4-6-8 Rock n Roll," it all adds up! M.O.T.O. is rock, and this really rocks like you wouldn't believe. Chicago's only punk genius delivers the goods and they are mighty good.

Mt. Egypt "Perspectives" (Flameshovel) Mt. Dreary.

Mud "Use Your Imagination" (7Ts) The 70s glam 50s revival made *Happy Days* seem like a gritty documentary, and here you hear some of the worst of it. BUT "Are You Man Enough" is as good a poppy take on Oi/pub/soccer chant candy glam as you'll ever hear!

The Muggs (Times Beach, timesbeachrecords.com) Mugged me with heavy rock ROCKNESS! You can't parody the great classic rock clichés, but these bad asses sure try!

Murmur by J. Niimi (Continuum) This is the best kind of book about an REM album possible – one that I didn't have to listen to the record to enjoy. Not a big fan of pretentious college rock, I actually have a lot of affection for rock writing with shameless pretensions. Why should Niimi shy away from using all of his erudite stock of book learnin', art history, and rock history? Comfortable inserting a very personal voice while still ready to use the valid tools of academia to make arguments, Niimi has created a book that's fun to read, even as it dissects track by track the content and recording history of the album I don't remember well or like. I still don't want to hear it, but I happily agree that "Murmur" fits well into the history of Southern gothic (though not goth) cultural products.

Mushroomhead "Volume 1" DVD (Filthy Hands) Since 1993 this massive Cleveland act (usually operating as an eight-piece) has been combining hardcore punk, metal, and plenty of industrial music as a soundtrack for one of the most dynamic masked stage shows in the extreme music world. As demonstrated in their new DVD, though not a household name, years of touring and recording have built a loyal following covered in tattoos of the band's logo, and these fungi-rockers get to experience as much on-the-road breaking stuff and vomiting as million-seller acts. While their tour bus antics certainly amuse them more than they will you, the concert footage and videos are pretty wicked cool if you like Nazi monster explosion rock extravaganzas.

Mutant Press "Slave to Fashion" (500 Pound Weasel) This old time rocker rocks out with some plain old good rockin' rock. Rock on!

Narc! zine (POB 820102 Portland OR 97282) Baseball, rock n roll, and bars. Three great flavors that taste better together!

Nausea "The Punk Terrorist Anthology Vol. II: 1986-1988" (Alternative Tentacles) I only saw Nausea once, around

1989 or so, and they were just about the only late 80s hardcore that seemed as vital and impressive as the early stuff. I remember being just mesmerized by their energy, dedication and earnestness. Not from the brutish strain of N.Y.C.H.C., this band actually was profoundly political in ways that you expected from Brit Crust punks but not from the tri-state area. These early tracks are pretty brutal and excellent. Even when they have guitar solos it doesn't sound like the dreaded mid-80s "crossover" hardcore, everything here seems REAL. If you never heard of them you need this.

Navies "An Estate" (Lovitt) This made ▬ want to clean a car in space. I'm drunk now, by the way.

Needs New Body "Where's Black Ben?" (5RC POBox 1190 Olympia WA 98507-1190) Created a need to move my old body. Not just funky, *fon-kay!*

Chuck Negron "biography of ▬ entertainer" DVD, "live and in concert" DVD (Delta 1663 Sawtelle Blvd LA, CA 90025) Negron was one of the leaders of the multi-headed hydra rock megaband Three Dog Night, and his tales of self-destructive behavior and recovery are the basis of these DVDs. The "biography" is a weird one, because though Chuck's magnetism and great archival footage of the band (and bonus material where Chuck appears on contemporary talk shows) hold this together, it looks like he hired some generic, cheap documentary making firm with no investment in him and a formula for inserting photos, talking heads, bad narration, etc. to come up with ▪ hokey finished product. Because of that I was surprised that the contemporary concert film was actually incredibly well shot and pretty compelling and high quality musically (some old Dogs are in the band). Chuck has ▪ good story, and he deserves his fans, but you'd have to be a really big fan to totally dig both of these.

The Neins Circa "Sunday Anthems" (Blue Curtain 726 Richards St. Vancouver BC V6B 3A4 Canada) Awesome record, with good songs that pleasantly tell good stories.

The Nervous Return "Wake Up Dead" (La Salle) Pop and punk but not at all pop punk.

New Dead Radio "Avalon Bridge Will Burn" (Mediaskare) A long, loud, post-Industrial metallic hardcore whine.

New England Roses "Face Time With Son" (Doggpony POB 461612 LA CA 90046) Sad.

New Estate "considering..." (Kittridge, www.kittnet.com) Put ▬ in a new state of audio ecstacy!

New Sense "Flowers Before Hours" (Brilliante) So dreamy that I shall re-spell the word as drrrrrreammmy.

Nil – A Land Beyond Belief by James Turner (Slave Labor Graphics POB 26427 San Jose CA 95159) This dense graphic novel would sound completely pretentious if I described it to you, which I guess I will: it's about little skeleton men in the Hellish realm of nihilism who manufacture and process ideologies, but when "all hell breaks loose," so to say, our protagonist escapes to the land of optimism. While the design is a little (intentionally) clinical, and the concepts are over-cerebral, Turner has a gift for dialogue, and the way the characters converse in manners that jump from the mundane and very human to the extremely stilted actually flows smoothly and makes this book work.

Nine on Bali "Kite Hawker on the Beach" (ACC, 7606 S. Kilpatrick Chicago IL 60652) The Dreary Beatles!

Nine Pound Hammer "Mulebite Deluxe" (Acetate POB 36756 LA CA 90036) These dudes were on of the best 90s garage revivalists before splintering up into other rawk acts, so I'm excited to get some of their best tracks and covers and a few rarities all compiled up. I don't know that this will convince folks who never heard them, but anyone who was assaulted by their music in person will really dig this.

Ninja High School "Young Adults Against Suicide" (Tomlab.com) An electronic throwing star that will pierce your dance-nerve after it hits your forehead, making you uncontrollably boogie as you leave this mortal coil..

9 Songs (Tartan Films) This movie was reviewed everywhere so you already know about it, since it is the one where ▪ sexy English couple have real sex and go to real rock shows. It doesn't seem like porn despite an actual cum shot because it is filmed in a much more naturalistic style. BUT the bands are shot in ▪ pro rock, dramatic way that's sorta porno flick related, It doesn't feel like being at a real show as much as the hot scenes feel like having real sex. Even ▪ band like Black Rebel Motorcycle Club, who make every show seem like a dramatic movie, feels faker here than they do in real life.

Nob Dylan and his Nobsoletes "Positively 12 Stiff Dylans" (Alternative Tentacles) We know Rev. Norb likes baseball, lusts Asian women and loves certain Packers (Green Bay, that is, not the fudge kind, though there may be some overlap) , but does he actually respect anything? Yes! Dylan lyrics. Actually, considering his verbosity that's shouldn't be surprising, but I still expected a less reverent approach from punk's poshest prankster. Leaving his absurdisms to the intros, Norb and his band add a driving, boogie-fied punk (not ▪ generic pop punk) to Dylans classics and not so classics and the results are a bit more than novelty, though plenty novel.

The Northern Hues (TWR) Hues the boss! I mean, this record is boss. Super sweet melodies and songcrafting with an undercurrent of edge and danger. Jangle-rific.

No Use For ▪ Name "Keep Them Confused" (Fat) How old will this guy have to get before his voice changes. I'm still waiting for pop punk sung in a nice bass.

NumberOneGun "Promises For the Imperfect" (Tooth and Nail) Number zero with a bullet.

The Number Twelve Looks Like You "nuclear, sad, nuclear" (Eyeball POB 179 Keamy NJ 07032) This chopped me up and ate me and sucked marrow out of my bones.

Ric Ocasek "Nexterday" (Inverse/Sanctuary) In our book Ocasek earned rock superhero status forever by helping out the Fast a quarter century ago, so I always dig what he does, but I would dig *this* album even if Ric helped Creed. This festive pop gems have that Ocasek voice cool-ly laying absurd lyrics atop some super hooky timeless New Wavey hit-esque tunes. Ric Rocs!

The Occasion "Cannery Hours" (Say Hey 11 East 14th St. #229 NYC 10003) Tempered, subtle psychedelia that crafts rather than spins their blissful compositions. I'm not sure what to think about this other then to say it is REALLY good.

Odlorne "Heavy Wish" (file 13 POB 804868 Chicago IL 60680) Intensely important seeming.

OJM "the light album" (Go Down) Awesome heavy poppy garage that rocked me so hard that I couldn't think of a clever review using the letters o, j and m.

"Old Skars and Upstarts 505" (Disaster) A street punk heavy compilation of rare tracks, including a couple of killer songs. So if you want to hear Die Hunns do Van Halen and Turbonegro do Bowie and Duane Peters do what he's done for the last century, skar yourself.

The Omens "Destroy the ESP" (Hipsville 2591 South Meade St. Denver CO 80219) Raw, spare, stumbly, screaming garage rock that sounds like actual monsters playing music.

The 101ers "Elgin Avenue Breakdown [Revisited]" (EMI) Best ever old punk/pub/rock band I never head of before! Get this!!!

Other Ghost "Manpire" (Radio Is Down pmb #1436/120 Sate Ave Olympia WA 98501) Spookily good desperate post-hardcore. Better than Booberries.

Oxford Collapse "A Good Ground" (Kanine) Oxfarts.

Ozomotli "Live at the Filmore CD/DVD (Concord) I've seen Ozo live and their energy, chemistry with the crowd and musicianship are awesome, as this DVD reveals. But what the CD reveals is that on most of the rap-based songs done by this Latin-Hip Hop-World music band seem really corny in that Black Eyed Peas way (though exponentially better than BEP because these guys are such good musicians). Overall, this is well meaning, and well done, but not actually great.

The Pages "Creatures of the Earth" (Unsound) Now that's bouncy!

Paleo "Misery, Missouri" (Future Farmer POB 225128 SF, CA 94122) Paleo-RIFFic! Actually that is what I would have said if this band had that name and rocked hard, but since this is actually pretty dreary music that doesn't make sense. But there's one pirate song that has a nice slow groove that I dug.

Paradise Boys "The Young and the Guest List" (5 Points) I like my dance music like I like my men; thin, gay and unoriginal. And fun!

John Parrish "Once Upon A Little Time" (Thrill Jockey, thrilljockey.com) I liked this dude's animal themed album, but this ▬ seems to have a theme of creepy, quiet singing, and they don't have zoos for that stuff, so I'm not really connecting.

Partyline "Girls with Glasses" (Retard Disco) The best actual band on this awesome label is Partyline because they make some killer dance punk that's both funtime happy music and political in a way that made me break plates like a Greek wedding and break windows like a WTO riot.

Pattern Is Movement "Stowaway" (NFI) Bowel Is Movement.

The Peppermints "Jesus Chryst" (Paw Tracks) I love art!

Joe Perry (Roman/Columbia) For Aerosmith fans this respectable, passable solo album is a fun bit of trivia, but not a major record. Interesting then that they made this a Dual Disk high end special release.

Personal Charm by Missy Kulik (missykulik.com) I love Missy's comix and have since she was a wee lass drawing them. That she has maintained her cute innocence and commitment to D.I.Y. in young adulthood is impressive, and this collection of her comix is a real treat. Seek it out, people.

The Phlegms "PhlegmTV Superstar (Listen Loudest) Raw, sloppy pop punk that's more punk than pop.

Piero Piccioni "The Seduction of Piero Piccioni" (Cherry Red) These Italian film soundtrack cuts from 60s sci fi, Western, and crime movies all makes me think of something a hot green chick from space would play on a harp to lure Captain Kirk to a sexy doom.

Piglet "Lava Land" (Team-AV) No thank you, I'm Kosher.

The Pines of Rome "The Everlasting Arms" (Corleone) Had me pining for the "off" button."

Pink Noise (pinknoise.com) Pink is beautiful!

Benoit Pioulard "enge" (moodgadget.com) Soothish.

Pirate Club by Derek Hunter comic (Slave Labor Graphics) See, I'm actually too old too follow any of those actual newfangled video games that are supposed to be narrative (the third screen of Ms. Pac Man was confusing enough to me (after "They meet..." I'm lost). So ▪ comic where heroes fight video game villains in some cyber realm has ▬ more confused than my grandma trying to download MP3s. But

I'm sure it's good.

Pointed Sticks "Perfect Youth" (Sudden Death Cascades POB 43001 Burnaby BC Canada V5G 3H) Late 70s/early 80s-era power pop/new wave silliness from Vancouver that sounds so 1980 that I got mad at Reagan. Nasal, bouncy and relatively pointy, this is definitely ■ worthy unearthing, and it explains why Canadians eat Power Pops breakfast cereal every morning

Pong "bubble city" (Realistic, pongsongs.com) A fitting tribute to Bob Moog is dancing to genuinely funky music made by exploiting his invention. The fact that this bizarre Nuevo-New Wave music is actually chilling and political (sorta) in content while making you robot dance is all the more impressive.

Iggy Pop "Live San Fran 1981" DVD (Target/MVD) Iggy has on and off studio periods, and this was shot during a murky moment in Igster-history, but he always delivered onstage and this Target video-reissue (one that I never saw back in Target's heyday) is no exception. Despite ■ few visual cures that might indicate you are in for ■ musically questionable experience (some having to do with the backing band, but this is surprisingly vital and arresting. And who doesn't need another DVD of a skinny, intense, lathered-up masochist in garters and stockings.

The Pope "jazzman cometh" (Wantage) Remember that stupid dance music called Drum and Bass? Fuck that, "Drum and Bass" should refer to a two piece band that just has a drummer and a bass player tearing shit up! This is an album that could kill evil demons with its mighty power. It is a storm of rock sound that doesn't sound like rock. All worship the new Pope (the non-Nazi version).

The Posies "Every Kind of Light" (Ryko) A respectable return. I was never a fan, but even from that position I'm pretty sure no one would go apeshit over this, but everything sounds nice.

The Post "in the event of tomorrow" (Jalisco 2836 South Walnut St. Pike Bloomington, IN 47401) The Post invented a new genre: forget post rock And post punk, this is post-interesting.

Post Stardom Depression "Preime Time Looks A Lot Like Amateur Night" (The Control Group 3414 Fremont Ave N Seattle WA 98103) This rocks like a big rock. This rocks so hard and so menacing and so righteously that it made my hair and sideburns grow.

Giorgio Pretti "Cuidado Mano: (brasillianbeat.com) Pretty.

Princess (Tony Chaos Records) Experimental strangoid music that just happens to have rapping on it.

Lou Profa The Heaven I Prayed," "dnevnik rokenrol zvijezde," "Sara," "Ne Brini," "das erwachen eines europatsche neuen sonnigen tages" (Slusaj Najglasnije Teskovec 27c 10090 Zagreb Croatia) Prolific Profa has folk, rock, singer-songwriter, new wave, and all other stuff happening on these albums. When he sings in English rather than his native Croatian it's a little hard to understand but very appreciated. He is a true CDR Superstar!

Purple Merkins "Merkinmania!" (Dionysus) If you're nostalgic for the 60s as nostalgized in the 90s than the current wave of reissues will be welcomed. But especially refreshing is this release, as these mirthful Mirk-meisters were a novelty 60s revivalist side-project band that made funny tunes in the rarely joyful psyche style. If you like guffaws while you get fuzz (gufuzzs some say) then get to jerkin' this merkin!

The Quags "Devil's Music" (Remote Listening 3311 SE 52nd Ave Portland OR 97206) The Quags aren't mired in bad rock but rather have Quag-bags full of hooks and grooves.

Quit Your Dayjob (Bad Taste) Electronic Swede punk that is both weirdly nutty and deadly serious. These Swedish meatballs will be your new favorite band if you ■ a dancing robot monkey. Or if, like me, you just act like one.

Rasputina "a Radical Recital" (Filthy Bonnet 321 Dean St. #2 Brooklyn NY 11217) There's always room for cello.

The Ratchets "Heart of Town" (Hell Bent POB 1529 Point Pleasant Beach NJ 08742) The Clash wont make bouncy songs about Iraq, so this impressive band is the closest we got.

Razorcake zine POB 42129 LA, CA 90042) Nardwuar + Norb + Sean Carswell + ■ drumming chicken in ■ bunny suit = awesome!

The Readymen (Jump Start 1867 Frankford Ave Philadelphia PA 19125) You want me to get nostalgic for 90s ska? Im not ready, man.

The Real McKenzies "10,000 Shots" (Fat) These are some great Scotts! If you thought the bagpipe break in "It's A Long Way To The Top if you want to Rock & Roll" was way too short, then this Celt-punk party is for you!

The Rebel "Kit" (Hook or Crook) The damage and chaos and seductive wrongness of the Country Teasers boiled down to one very evil genius. This is so good and bad it hurts to listen ■ but you can't turn it off.

Recent Photo "The Monster Within" (recentphotomusic.com, 1333 N. Milwaukee Chicago IL 60622) A modest yet ambitious concept album that uses lowkey (but densely layered) pop ■ explore evil. I like the use of evil deep voices to be extra scary. And sometimes the guy affects a near-English accent to convey gravity. A fun journey to nasty.

Red Sparrows "at the soundless dawn" (neurotrecordings.com) big Big BIG **BIG** sounds! Epic and monumental and dramatic and behemothic music. Too big too judge.

Reno 911! Complete Second Season Uncensored! DVD (Comedy Central Home Video) This is Comedy Central's best show, and ■ of the only great improv-based shows on TV. (*Arrested Development* is almost completely scripted, I understand). The outtakes confirm how sharp and creative these comics are, as they include some interminably long ad lib scenes (one featuring the hilarious set up of two cops giving an oft-raped male clerk a hard time in the wake of yet another gang rape – try yelling that scenario out at Second City and have them try to make something knee-slapping out of it). If you've longed for racism, rape, canibalism and Kenny Rogers to be funny again, this is your DVD!

Justin Clifford Rhody/Little Wings split LP (Friends and Relatives POB 23 Bloomington IN 47402/Bitter Like a Bean POB 34675 Philadelphia PA 19139) The two band sharing this slab of 12" green vinyl share more than just lo fi indie sensibilities. The theme here seems to be little kid recordings, as the Rhody side is overtly a document of a teenager getting sensitive thoughts on vinyl. More interesting is Little Wings who pepper their charming tunes with skits and fake newscasts that sound like something ■ couple of kids would make ■ a cassette recorder. Wicked indie!

The Ribeye Brothers "Bar Ballads and Cautionary Tales" (Times Beach Records, timesbeachrecords.com) Raunchy Hillbilly garage honky-tonk rock that made me want ■ invent some kind of squaredance/slamdance hybrid.

Riddle of Steel "got this feelin'" (Ascetic) Should be called Balls of Steel, because despite airiness this has *balls*!

Rock Bottom zine (send stamps, c/o Marcy Miller 10088 Pleasant Ridge Rd, PA 17228) The bottom line is that *Rock Bottom* is a zine that gets the rock out. Not a punk zine and certainly not an indie rock zine, this is a mag about upcoming or unjustly obscure hard rock talent, and if you want to headbang outside the box send a couple of dollars worth of stamps their way.

"Rock ■ Roll Eulogy" DVD (rockandrolleulogy.com) Indie Z-movie visionary Zach Clark crafts ■ cautionary tale of an Eisenhower-era girl gone bad due to the overtly Satanic influence of Rock & Roll (Satan himself has ■ cameo in the film). Certainly cheap wigs and iffy sound and lighting creep in here and there, but the trashabilly soundtrack, ridiculous violence (Spoiler alert: features the best LPatricide scene ever) and great physical comedy from the lead actress make this ■ devilishly good rocker.

***Rockers* 25th Anniversary Edition** DVD (MVD) **Rockers** DVD (MVD) The only thing wrong with this fantastic reggae flick is that it's not *The Harder They Come*, a Jamaican rude boy movie that proceeded it (I've even seen this billed as a sequel). The similarities are that both films involve the corrupt record industry and ■ hero who becomes a social bandit/underground hero/Robin Hood. The biggest difference is that Jimmy Cliff, the star of *Harder* was a charismatic leading man who fit the Errol Flynn standards of Western pirate movies. Horsemouth, the star of *Rockers* possesses a loping coolness that doesn't translate as well to American eyes. His presence leads to a relaxed, unusual rhythm that recalls African cinema (the film also shares with African films the expansive naturally sunlit exteriors, the untrained actors and the children always playing on the perimeter). For Reggae fans this is ■ treat, as the stars not only perform, but act as well, playing extensions of themselves. Jacob Miller is a singer *and* a gluttonous comic character, Gregory Isaacs is ■ iconic frontman *and* a master lockpicker, Jack Ruby is a Reggae producer *and* the super-connected dude who will get you out of anything. The best thing here is the sense of community; it's great to see how loyal everyone is to Horsemouth when the Mafia starts fucking with him, leading to a populist revenge scheme. This deluxe DVD looks far better than the DVD from a few years ago. Bonus material includes music videos, the trailer, commentary from the director and a book of beautiful production stills and a reggae dictionary.

The Rockets "Rise of the Undead" (Hairball) Trashabilly about monsters, girls and other monsters will never get a bad review in this magazine! Brought out the *Famous Monsters* reader in me!

Rocket 350 "Built To Last" (Rock N Roll Purgatory POB 771153 Lakewood OH 44107) This rocket crashed at exactly the halfway point between old time rockabilly and timeless rustbelt bar rock. Then it refueled with Schlitz and blasted off again.

Rock 'N' Roll Monkey and the Robots "Detroit Trauma" (drastic-plastic.com) POB 981378 Ypsilanti MI 48198) More awesome than a barrel of monkeys or a dumpster of robots!

Lou Rone "Alone" (Gulcher) Bad.

The Rotten Fruits "Abomination" ep (Criminal I.Q.) A lot of bands try to be as awful and ridiculous and absurd as they can be, but few achieve the awfulness, absurdity and ridiculous the way these awful, absurd ridiculous fruits do.

The Route 66 Killers "Murder on Beaver Street" (gravewaxrecords.com) Instrumentally ill scary mood music tracks that combine surf, Spaghetti Western and the music when the killer with the hook approaches the car.

Sam Champion "slow rewind" (Razor and Tie) If you're the type who woulda dug it if the Velvet Underground made Americana music then you'll champion this band.

Sky Saxon "Transparency" (Jungle) "Little Red Book" I saw Saxon perform not long ago and was impressed with his physique, energy and spirit, but not with the show. He seemed kind of unfocussed in a weird way, and I was pretty bored. I, however, dug last year's Seeds album and was looking forward to this solo release, though was a bit wary due to that odd live show (which of course I couldn't walk out on; how can you leave ■ Seeds show before they do "Pushing Too Hard?"). Anyhoo, it turns out this album is *excellent*, far better than that last great Seeds record. There is not a garage cliché on here, and Sky's voice sounds like a man who is grounded on earth, informed by the stars, and in no way mired inn the past. What ■ wonderful surprise, thanks Sky!

Scharpling & Wurster "The Best of Vol. 3" (Stereolaffs) S & W, though operating from a home base of radio (the legendary WFMU), ■ actually the most traditional comedy record makers operating today. Combining Bob Newhart's absurdist phone call concept with the Bob and Ray interview-an-oddball shtick, each ingenious scenario involves indie rock-centric WFMU deejay Tom Scharpling do a phoner with an unusual character, and by the end of the interview things usually go very far South (the caller is more likely to threaten to kill Tom than set up a return call). Though the title routine, about a sleazy hippy, is not the sharpest bit here (it's a little long and takes on a pretty easy

target), ▬ of the comedy here is the funniest stuff the duo has ever done. I challenge any longtime punk fan to not laugh out loud as the interview with ■ grown member of kiddie-punk band Old Skull unfolds. Or a call to Gene Simmons' car dealership, ▬ ■ conversation with an adorable tiny man with a less than adorable worldview, or the greatest record collector obscurity-laced conversation ever recorded between Tom and "Kid Ebay," the master of internet auctions, who has encountered some serious troubles in the non-cyber world. It's hard to talk about this seriously funny double CD without giving away ▬ much, but suffice to say that if you are in the FMU demographic this will be as funny as ■ Phyllis Diller album, and even if you fall outside that category this is still funnier than Nichols and May.

Tina Schlieske "Slow Burn" (Movement) The bluesy, country-rockish material here isn't exceptional, but Tina has a really strong voice that balances ■ nice tinge of gritty edge with beautifully clean notes that really ring.

John Schooley and his One Man Band (Voodoo Rhythm) Schooley is the best blues one man band around, channeling the old time blues buskers; deeply understanding archival blues recording; never sounding like a minstrel wigger; always making deep, moving music; and confirming that the ragged, minimal nature of street blues creates just about the best music in history. School me, Schooley!

Scum of the Earth "Blah...Blah...Blah" (Eclipse) Not the worst record ever.

Self-Evident "Epistemology" (Doubleplusgood POB 3690 Mpls MN 55403)Self-Impediment.

Matt Serv "a ▬ perfect union" (Riff Rat POB 2181 Stamford CT 06906) The first 20 or so words of Serv's opening track, about running into Buddha, are so perfectly awful that I had to stop listening lest the rest of the CD ruin the perfect moment I was experiencing.

Seventeen Evergreen "Life Embarasses Me On Planet Earth" (Pacific Radio Fire) This music is so sexy I'd fuck these guys, and I'm 200 percent straight. But getting less so with every spin of this CD.

Thee Shams "Sign The Line" (Shake It 4156 Hamilton Ave, Cincinnati OH 45223) Garage isn't a straitjacket, it's a foundation, and these Midwestern rockmasters throw in some snazzy piano pop, Velvet moodiness (Underground, not Revolver or Monkeys), an acoustic strum here and there, and several tempos (a garage rarity). Shamtastic!

Shangri La 2006 Memphis Music Calendar (shangrilaprojects.com) Absolutely the best calendar that you could possibly get for next year. 12 exquisite Memphis music photos that range from 50s rockabilly to 90s garage to points between and beyond. I can't begin to tell you how beautiful and serious these pictures are. You could stare at Otha Turner, the Rock n Roll Trio, the MGs, and even the ugly Oblivians for a month and never tire because these fotos capture ▬ much about this magnificent city and the nature of good music in general. Even a concert photo of a rapper who I don't know of named Al Kapone rules just as ■ formal photo. To top it off, there's 2 great pix of local music TV shows being shot, one in the 40s and ▬ in the 70s. I love TV studio pictures!

Sharks and Seals "It Used To Be Knobs and Machines and Now It's Numbers and Light" (Brilliante) Though these sharks are toothless and the seals are pretty much clapping-fin free, this act makes ▬ powerfully pretty semi-improvised strangeness.

Shelby "the luxury of time" (Gigantic Music 59 Franklin St. suite 403 NYC 10013) Smellby.

Shimmer (Cake POB 1801 Tacoma, WA 98401) This awful music made me throw up, but luckily Shimmer is a floor cleaner (no it's a dessert topping!).

Shuck the Sulfurstar comic by Rick Smith (Sulfurstar.com) This comic combines the diction of Krazy Kat and the joyful design of Cheech Wizard, with the storytelling of some confusing Gertrude Stein piece that I don't want to follow.

Sicbay "Suspicious Icons" (54 40 or Fight) This is an awesome schizo selection of dynamic, abrasive, seductive music that seems really smart and really dumb at the ▬ time.

Silver Jews "Tanglewood Numbers" (Drag City) Listening to songs that ▬ as seductively odd, sublimely beautiful, and brilliantly named ▬ "Animal Shapes," "Sometimes A Pony Gets Depressed," "How Can I Love You If You Won't Lie Down" makes me baffled about why it is that so many people hate Jews. And Drag City.

Shel Silverstein "the best of...his words his songs his friends" (Columbia) Silverstein was a wordsmith in an era when you could write for kids and *Playboy* and Kris Kristofferson simultaneously without reproach. His children's books ▬ beloved partly because of his bizarre illustrations, but ▬ because his musical poetry had a naughtiness and fearlessness that kids knew was a little dangerous. With his deep voice, sounding somewhere between ■ cartoon character and a lecher, he recorded spoken word album ■ of his most popular kids books (A Light in the Attic and Where the Sidewalk Ends), and though theoretically for kids, those pieces make perfect sense on this CD next ■ the novel pop song she wrote for himself and for various country and rock performers. Shel's writing voice is so strong that this is cohesive even ▬ it goes from act to different act, but I could use a little more Shel, at least on one track. This includes many of Shel's own recordings, but also the most famous versions by the stars he wrote for, and while his huge hit "Cover of the Rolling Stone" had to be sung by ■ real rock band (Dr. Hook) to have relevance, the excellent "Freakin' at the Freaker's Ball" is a song that Shel did infinitely better on his solo album then Dr. Hook did on the version included here. Other than that, what can I complain about? It's all here, Bobby Bare's "Marie Lavaux," Willie & Waylon's "A Couple More Years," and (of course" Johnny Cash's "A Boy Named Sue." This is a monument to creativity that every adult who was ever a child should own.

The Sincerity Guild "What It's Like" (Theory 8 1402 Ardee Dr. Lavergne TN 37086) The Somnombulist Guild

Skarp "Requiem" (Alternative Tentacles) This is just about the most intense crusty grindcore explosion you will ever hear. To expand you vocabulary let ▬ give you this lesson: if your stereo makes sounds that rips off your flesh and grinds your skull and brains into mush, then you've been "skarped."

Skoljke "Svakome Njegovo!" (Slusaj Najglasnije) Ominous rock plus dire Croatian vocals equals an Eastern European asskicking!

Robert Skoro "That These Things Could Be Ours" (Yep Roc) Robert Bore-o.

Skyscraper magazine (POB 4432 Boulder CO 80306) Though magazines about indie rock bands are almost always dull by their very nature (they interview musicians in their twenties who often pride themselves on preciousness), this telephone book-sized tome keeps it interesting simply by having thoughtful, non-snarky writers who know how ■ contextualize ■ review, and know what is interesting in an interview. Though the layout of the mag is pretty good, I do get ■ little glazed over reading this due to the fact that almost every interview is a standard length, which allows them to get a lot of bands covered, but leaves you wanting when ■ band really has something to say.

Sloppy Meateaters "Conditioned By The Laugh Track" (Orange Peal POB 15207 Fremont CA 94539) Made me turn vegetarian.

Small Jackets "Plat ▬ High Level" (Go Down) Soul and Roll that is so classic it turned my Geo into Camaro.

small press review zine (POB 100 Paradise CA 95967) Small press reviewed in a zine.

Soe ▬ "why do you die?" (gringo POB 7546 Nottingham, NG2 4WT, UK) Soe Soe.

so I'll "dear Kathy," (goodbyebetter.com) ■ l'il bit bad.

so many dynamos "when I explode" (scrokirecords 705 North 79th St Seattle WA 98103) Dynamotional!

Sonic Love Affair "S.L.A." (Dollar Record Records) Trash rockers that know how to switch to "boogie" mode, "garage" mode and "fuck you maybe we suck but we rock" mode.

So They Say (Fearless 13772 Goldenwest St. #545 Westminster CA 97683) Say no more.

The Soviettes "LP III" (Fat) Should be called the SoviBESTS!

Space Cretins "Rocket Roll" (Killing Pig) This made me rock so hard and so stupid that I lost substantial IQ points.

Space Vacuum From Outer Space "Starcade" (Dionysus) Zolar X meets Man or Astro Man at their goofiest, if that combination created a space-wigged, mostly girl pop punk act. You need to get you some Space Booty, and this ■ your best source.

Spoken "Last Chance to Breathe" (Tooth and Nail) Best Tooth and Nail record in a few years, this genuinely rocks and keeps it compelling throughout the intensity and seriousness.

"Stairway To Rock (Not Just) A Led Zeppelin Tribute" (Koch) Dude, you know what would make Zeppelin songs better? Raps!

Stamen ■ Pistils "End of the Sweet Parade" (Echelon POB 33382, WDC 20033) Precious.

The Starvations "Gravity's A Bitch" (GSL) If you hunger for punked out Irish-jiggish blues rock with a few dirges thrown in, than go on a Starvations diet!

Stiffed "Burned Again" (Outlook, outlookmusic.com) Perky, yet slightly dangerous sounding, punkish groovy music that makes you want o pogo slightly and then fall in love.

The Stivs "Sweet Heartache and the Satisfaction" (Boot to the Head) Stooge-y street punk that has a fucking attitude but also has actual hooks.

Stockyard Stoics (Sudden Death/Jump Start) Grizzled pub punk that made me mosh...but also made me think!

The Stoneage Hearts "Guilty as Sin" (alive) Perfect 60s style garage rock that keeps Greg Shaw's spirit alive, and he would have wanted you to dig this. This is an awesome record that should be heard rather than read about.

Straitjacket "Modern Thieves" (TKO 8941 Atlanta Ave #505 Huntington Beach, CA 92646) Oi-sh and joyous Brit-style punk! They're going Strait to the top!

The Stranglers "Live in San Francisco, 1978" (mVD) This is, of course, a DVD reissue of an original, now scarcer than virginity, Target Video release that I only previously had on a $4 VHS tape (which was then just slightly above Z-grade), in SLP speed. I was as happy as a pig in shit to see this finally reissued, but, was a black and white (with some single color washes) DVD with only seven songs (with the closer, "Grip," only heard over the credits, with no accompanying video footage) and no extras (not even castoff footage of other bands) worth what I paid for it?($15). Well, as a fan of the early Stranglers, I'd say " Yeah," but I would suggest that you be a bit less impulsive, and look around for a better price. Still, I don't mind giving the Target Video people my money. I had to rent and copy releases like this in the late 80s-early 90s because most of 'em were not even available for sale anymore, which has got fuck-all to do with The Stranglers, but the general rarity of ANY footage of the band in their heyday makes this very desirable, whether you had it previously, or not. This is an outstanding performance, from the band's "Too good for Punk" musicianship (which plagued them with unfair comparisons to The Doors for much of their career), their witty stage banter, consisting mainly of "SHUT UP! SHUT UP!" (so much for playing down Doors comparisons!), and some great songs. Sure, The Stranglers were ■ bit of an anomaly in the London Punk boom of '76. They'd already been around just over two years, and were a bit older than most of the "Rotten Youth " ruling the streets in their little uniforms. They even had varying degrees of facial hair-drummer, Jet Black, had a scraggly beard, while keyboardist, Dave Greenfield, sported ■ full Tom's of Finland mustache and long, dark hair that made him

resemble a much handsomer Beefheart. Talk about lookers, French expatriate (probably also uncool for a British Punk band, ditto for his being a Karate expert, but don't tell HIM that), J.J.Burnell, proved quite the sex symbol, even making a female journalist, who was all keen to call him out as a sexist, admit he was about the hottest thing going. What's this got to do with the songs? Not shit one, though I really like Greenfield's sinister delivery (he shoulda sang more) "Dead Ringer" (I have a theory that the song was directed at Johnny Rotten), and his "so not Punk" keyboard excursions on the "Massive, sweaty, organ" go in many directions, yet remain focused. It's possible that his organ stylings evoke Jon Lord more than Ray Manzarek (who wasn't that great, anyway). Hugh Cornwall and J.J.Burnell both sing with plenty of swagger and lager, foaming at the mouth about "issues" (like, you know, shagging). Another highlight is "Dagenham Dave" (which Morrissey might have covered. I was too scared to investigate that prospect), about the sudden death of a Black friend and fierce supporter (if you think The Stranglers weren't "down with the brothers," consider that the hulking Jet Black used to promise to sort out anyone who had a problem with Steel Pulse acting as their guests on tour, a gesture David Hines commended the band for, stating that "They stand for the same things we do"). Overall, this DVD is definitely a pretty cool reminder that Punk wasn't all safety pins and ineptitude. You probably remember the first time you had that epiphany, whether it was this year or 25 years ago. I can sense that many people had one the night this was made. Incidentally, if, by some strange occurrence, J.J. (or any Stranglers, past or present) reads this, I tried to give you a note , 12 years ago, at one of your gigs, to let you know that Bobby Soxx, the guy who slashed your tires in Dallas in 1980 was in prison (on a far more serious charge). He's since died. "I'm not gonna cry. I barely hit that water high."

Stray From the Path "Our Oceania (Five Point Star POB 230026 NYC 10023-0001) chaotic h/c metal punk that spuzzes, jazzes and decompazzes!

Style Wars DVD (Public Arts Films) The book Subway Art is held up by many non-New Yorker graffiti artists as the most important proselytizer of the NYC style. But this unbelievable 1983 PBS documentary is really the best document of the art ever made. What's interesting is that seeing the burners (full subway car murals) in motion actually reveals many of the formal weaknesses that the book's small photos don't convey. The youthful artistés made work that was clunky, somewhat unoriginal (while the lettering was new, imagery was lifted from 60s underground comix) and often kind of ugly. But seeing them in motion with New York around them contextualizes them in a way where you see how genius they really were as part of a vital urban landscape. But this doc isn't really about the artwork, its about he artists. Seeing these young New Yorkers completely invested in the creativity of hip hop culture (breaking is well represented, with a smattering of rap) in a world where no one dreamed of becoming a hip hop mogul is amazing. One graffiti artist and his hilarious, dismissive mom interviewed, and the other artists (adolescent and world-weary, black and white, dirt poor and privileged) profiled create equally memorable sequences. The seriousness with which rival breaking crews, or rogue graffiti artists, take things is intense. And the documentary also covers intense politicians and subway employees who out to end the paint era (which they would within the decade). The original *Style Wars* (remastered so beautifully it looks like it was shot yesterday) is enough, but the bonus material includes contemporary interviews with most of the living principal players, a montage of subway art, a contemporary hip hop soundtrack, and filmmaker interviews. You shouldn't be allowed to buy a rap CD without owning this.

Sugar Eater "Nine Songs by..." (Eyephat POB 1156 Saratoga Springs NY 12866) Pop punk so sweet that it gave me diabetes!

Swarm of the Lotus "The Sirens of Silence" (Abacus) AAAAARRRRGGGGHHHH! That's good angry music!

Sweatmaster "Tom Tom Bullet" (Bad Afro) Sweet bastards!

Sweet "Level Headed" (Lemon) Buy every Sweet reissue.

Sybris (Flameshovel 1658 N. Milwaukee Ave. #276 Chicago IL 69647) Syb-arific!

Sympathizers (thnthn, 1325 N. 5th St #4D Phila PA 19122) Like a turntable with a weary motor that can't quite keep it at 33.3, this strange, dark music seems just off enough to keep everything compelling.

The Tah-Dahs "Le Fun." (Undeniable) The Tooh-Clevers.

Tastes Like Chicken magazine (2571A North Bartlett Ave Milwaukee WI 53211) First things first: *The Onion* has fucked up a lot of would-be humorists, as it is easy to copy their deadpan pseudo-journalistic style. But throw away the unfunny news stories and this magazine has a solid foundation with great interviews with some of the best musicians and comics and cultural figures out there (including Aesop Rock, Alex Borstein, and Jerry Springer). All interviews are accompanied by spiffy illustrations. My main gripe is I wish the interviews were longer.

Otis Taylor "Below The Fold" (Telarc) Progressive Blues like an oxymoron, or perhaps a bad idea. That is, until you hear Taylor's remarkable material. Hypnotizing music that seems lushly minimal (if such a thing is possible) Taylor's scathing explorations of centuries of American racism have physical effects on the listener, with the music and the subject matter grabbing your intestines and twisting. Yet this material is also seductively beautiful. Taylor is one of the great musicians working today.

Television Hill "Twilight" (Teneral, teneralrecords.com) Look, I dig the Americana, but if you over-twang the vocals you're the country equivalent of a Wigger talking all 'ghetto.' You're a C&Wigger.

The Templars "Clockwork Orange Horrorshow" (Templecombe POB 602 Bayshore NY 11706) Reissues a decade old American Oi classic that actually sorta vibes with the movie of the title to music (vaguely). Plus an Angelic Upstarts cover!

Robert Temple and the Soufolk Ensemble "What Would You Do?" (Broken Pretzel POB 3183 Oakland CA 94609) Thoughtful bluesy music that really gives you something to think about out. Like, "Hmmm. What other CDs do I have to listen to..."

temporary comic by Damon Hurd and Rick Smith (Origin 1430 Rte 300 suite 2 Newburgh NY 12550) Hurd and Smith are fine storytellers, and this series has a fantastic premise: a temp with moxie enters surreal work situations each issue. The crafting of these bizarre scenarios is handled so well, and is so captivating, that my main critique is that there's too much else. The protagonist, Envy, is a kleptomaniac who has an imaginary friend. Since the "temping" thing is so satisfying by having Envy have two things going on internally seems like overkill. That's just a quibble, however, this comic is one of the best new titles out there.

Terramara "Four Blocks to Hennapin" (2510 Jones Pl. Bloomington MN 55431) Mature pop so good I want TerraMORE-a!

Thee More Shallows "More Deep Cuts" (Turn POB 784 Santa Clara, CA 95052) Twee bore swallows.

13th hole "Jack is back!" (Limbo Discs) Amazingly awesome pretty and messy rock that makes want to put things in my 13 holes.

Three Piece Combo (feast or famine) Time signature changes cool.

Throw Rag "13 Ft & Rising" (BYO) Somewhat eerie and evil bluesy/hillbilly-tinged, supposedly nautical-inspired punk+ rock that salutes the early Cramps legacy of making muck out of music with pride. This is one Rag I would keep bedside no matter how much nasty use it endured.

Thunderlip (Lucid 665 Timber Hill Rd. Deerfield IL 60015) This punky screaming-over –bar rawk band definitely rocks, but they seem think rocks more than it does, which could serve them well in the long rock journey ahead of them.

Ticonderoga "The Heilig-Levine LP" (54 40 or Fight) The problem with post-rock is there's too many goddamn parts of the songs. I start to get a little nauseous after the eighth different part..

The Time Flys "Fly" (Birdman pob 50777 LA, CA 90041) These raw rockers are so punk that they're the only flys who have shit land on *them*!

Mary Timony "Ex Hex" (Lookout 3264 Adeline St. Berkeley, CA 94703) Timony's new tight band (a duo) is making some awesome music, simultaneously spare and lush. This is some of her best stuff ever, and she's made a lotta good music.

tiny hawks "fingers become bridges:"(Corleone POB 65 Providence 02901) These little birds make big noises, as if they flew into an industrial fan of some type and lodged into something important. Super fast and super weird and super chaos theory mathematic music that made me simultaneously smarter and dumber.

The Tom Collins "daylight tonight" (Terminus) Wilco with balls.

Totally Fucking Gay "With Friends Like These Who Needs Enemas?" (?) Gays have the right to make terrible records, too!

Totally HITS 2005 (Warner) Now that's what I call a hits compilation!

Towers of London "On A Noose" w/ "I Lose It," "Fuck It Up" b/w "Down In The Streets" (TVT) Towering!

T.P. Comix & Art zine (sophiecrumb@hotmail.com) This comix compilation zine gathers raw comix from young Crumb's Brooklyn co-horts (she's studied tattooing with UFA's Suerte) and other underground zinesters around the world. Definitely some of these artists are purposefully ragged and anti-aesthetic, while others are lushly stylistic, but overall these are artists who embrace the underground mini-comix vibe. It's really excellent that Crumb, who has had some of her collaborative work prominently published, would put out such a youthful, jagged, d.i.y. Xerox book.

Tractor Sex Fatality "Live It Down" ep.(Big Neck)This rocked so hard it made me vomit up love.

Trailerpark Tornados "Mata Al Contacto" (Big Neck) Rockin' rock so fucking stupid and rocking that it *rocks*!

Traindodge "Torch EP + 2" (No Karma, 169 E. Montana St Milwaukee WI 53207) This train must be a bullet train because this album is gonna be #1 with a bullet!

T. Rex "Born TO Boogie" DVD, "Born to Boogie The Soundtrack Album" CD (Sanctuary) This is an ultra-deluxe DVD reissue of a concert film produced by Ringo Starr. There are a number of reasons this is remarkable, but mostly it is because this was a dynamic concert by a band that actually was sorta the biggest, best act in the world for the brief period when this was made. More visually and musically interesting is the studio session filmed for this movie where Starr jams on some tunes with Bolan and the boys while they get really loose. Rounding out the film are segments conceived by the very high and not-as-clever-as-they-think Bolan and Starr that are supposed to be surreal genius vignettes (Starr in an animal suit in a limo in the desert with a midget eating their driver side mirror). But, like much of the film, it becomes more exciting after viewing the bonus material. We learn that the butler at their would-be weird Alice in Wonderland-esque tea party was a

popular kiddie TV star at the time, playing ■ medieval wizard who gets transported to the 70s. Seeing the footage of that show, and hearing tales of how delighted Bolan ■ to hang with his fave wizard (and seeing how cool the old dude still is in a contemporary interview) are magic. There is also some amazing stuff about how this film was restored (for you tech geeks) including astonishing VHS release footage side by side with restored DVD footage. Most poignant is the fact that this reissue and the documentary interviews are helmed by Bolan's young African American son who never knew his father, but is seeking connection through this project. Everyone keeps telling him these great things about his father and you can tell it really means something to him. Bonus material includes all the fottage from the concert plus a whole second concert. There is also a separate soundtrack album with a 2nd disc containing an additional concert and ■ BBC interview with Marc, but the DVD is the must-get, the CD is just a nice bonus.

The Tri-Fives "Wont Back Down" (Fastmusic POB 206512 New Haven CT 06520) I guess I'm a Tri-sexual because I liked this CD so much I wanted to fuck it!

The Trouble "nobody laughs anymore" (Bridge Nine) It's hard to call a mid '90s album classic (or to consider reissuing it), but this Boston punk band really understood how to fuse pub punk, hardcore and some less savory 90s sounds (sparingly) to create a record that would sound good whatever decade it was released.

Troubled Hubble "Making Beds In A Burning House" (Lookout 3264 Adeline St., Berkeley, CA 94703) Bubbles and ru(m)bles. Lubbable!

TSAR "Band Girls Money" (TVT 23 E. 4th St. NYC 10003) If its possible for there too be too much hookage and riffage TSAR is pushing towards that limit. Their glammy, poppy rock always seems to be at 11, and while nothing here is a brilliant masterpiece, you gotta love kick ass aspirations, as this is definitely "kickaspirational"®. (Don't use that word without paying me)

Turn Me On Dead Man "God Bless the Electric Freak" (Alternative Tentacles) If there is such a thing as Stadium Psychedelia that is what to call the giant music these freak-flag-flyers fabricate.

Two Year Touge "The Midi West" (CDB POB 8681 Missoula, Montana 59807) Naïve or nigh evil? When music is innocent and raw and spare and flat and strange there's always that chance that it's a trick, but I'll be the sucker and get charmed anyhow.

Ugh! "metaustrat" (Elektrohasch) Made me have an Ugh!asm! Stoner rock you can disco dance to.

Ugly Things magazine (www.ugly-things.com) If you refuse to read this magazine you ■ stupid. A bible of some sort.

Ultralyd "Chromosome Gun" (Load) Skrokulating saxophone over barbarian fight sounds. Norwegians are cool!

Unknown Component "From Anywhere But Here" (unknowncomponent.com) Keith Lynch is a moody singer-songwriter whose music creates a powerful sense of hope-tinged despair or despair-tinged hope.

Dino Valente (RPM) This late 60s singer –songwriter record is just OK, but the photos, liner notes and backstory make the thing really work. Busted by the man, jailed on account of subversive lyrics and his dealings with strippers, rockers, and other chaos, Valente was the real deal, which in the 60s was a rarity.

Valina "Epode" (54 40 or Fight) Cholacate.

Vaux "Beyond Virtue, Beyond Vice" (Lava) They're brutal…then they're pretty. They make extreme rock…then nice pop. They are deep!

Venue "One Without A Second" (Brilliante) I don't actually understand what it means that electronic computer talk has to do with 1's and 0's spaced apart in a certain w ay, but I do understand that most electronic music seems to have too many spaces between everything. It's often fun to robot dance to but rarely does it seem like a full-bodied, cohesive organic whole. This awesome CD turns that inside out. These ■ rich, organic electronic soundscapes that cohere into great songs. Venue is a new breed of robot musician with soul.

Veronica Lipgloss & the Evil Eyes "The Witch's Dagger" (GSL) Post-post-No Wave minimal monster music that will turn every day into Halloween at a haunted brothel

The Very Foundation "Small Reserves" (Velvafonic) Dynamic songcrafting that isn't always moving but when it is, move outta the way!

Victory Gardens (Magic Hat 525 Linden Ave. Doylestown PA 18091) Enchanted Beatles-esque candyland music.

Volebeats "Like Her" (Turquoise Mountain) These guys have been around forever and my only thought I have when I hear them is "What exactly does the root "vol" ■ Whatever gives "volume" and "volatile" their bang ain't nowhere to be found here. Maybe the Dullebeats would be a better name.

Voltage "Building the Bass Castle, Vol. 1" (Flameshovel) Really good electronic instrumental story songs about ■ far off land where mechanical woodland creatures watch knights and wizards battle, but don't really care, as their pursuit of low-end digital nuts and berries is of greater concern.

Martha Wainwright (Zoe/Rounder 1 Camp St. Cambridge MA 02140) Martha…I love you!

Johnny "Guitar" Watson "in Concert" DVD (inakustik) This series of ■ TV German concerts by Blues legends is usually pretty bunk, because the 80s had such cheesy instrumentation and the show is so soul-free. That said, a real showman like the great, great, great Johnny "Guitar" Watson, delivers a real mother foray of a performance, strutting, clowning, going out into the audience, and basically proving how incredible underrated he was. Though Z.Z. Hill is credited with being the dude who brought real blues back to black radio, but I think Watson deserves credit for making funky radio pop that was pretty blues-based ■ the ■ time. My biggest beef about this release is that is has a pretty boring cover…if Johnny was alive he would have come up with something hilarious visual pun. He was funny that way.

"We Reach: The Music of the Melvins" compilation (Fractured Transmitter) This comp features noisy genius bands like Eyehategod and Mastodon, but also acts with broader audio appeal like Dillinger Escape Plan and Strapping Young Lad covering tunes by a band that seems pointless to cover. None of the drumming here is as huge as the Melvins drumming and I never really thought of Melvins tunes as distinct individual things but rather part of a huge mass that seem odd when chipped off. Maybe Melvin-maniacs will understand why they made this.

Where is the Chesterfield King?!?! DVD (MVD) An ultra low budget star vehicle for a band that were never stars but deserved a movie anyhow. This 80s band that was a 60s revival band spent several hours in the early 2000s pretending to be the Monkees, as they made this wacky misadventure mystery movie that makes the Vanilla Ice flick look like Gone With the Wind. That said, grown men with shag haircuts rocking around the world as they attempt to save their drummer is something you should see, and if you ever wanted to know what kind of apartment you could afford by playing garage rock for 20 years check this flick out, as they surely filmed the interiors at home.

Whiskey Daredevils "Greatest Hits" (Drink and Drive POB 771101 Lakewood OH 44107) The Cowslingers have morphed into an equally cow-like hillbilly garage trash rock outfit that slings the patties as good as ever. Any band that follows an irreverent Gospel song with ■ country-fried Dead Kennedys cover followed by an ode to Mickey's BigMouth malt beverage qualifies as an official "class act" in my book. The book is titled, CLASS ACTS I HAVE DECLARED by F. W. Timbsdayle. Buy it on Amazon.

The White Mice "Assphixxxcatateshun" (Load) Sounds more like Philipino Rats. In ■ cyclotron. After taking depressants. While listening to Sun City Girls on tiny rodent-sized iPods.

"Wildcat Jamboree! Rockabilly Radio Broadcasts from the Dixieland Jamboree, Corinth, Mississippi 1958-59" compilation (Norton) Unbelievably good. Sure you've heard Grand Ole Opry radio broadcasts, and this has all the goods (ads built into the broadcast, hokey emcee, southern fried charm dripping everywhere), but it's ■ rockabilly based show rather than countrified. Sure, to many ■ there's not much difference, but those listeners are insane. Curtis Hoback and the Stardusters (or the All Stars as the emcee calls them) do a rockabilly "Tom Dooley," "Mona Lisa" and "Sea of Love" and Hoback doesn't sound like a wild Sun teenager, but like a gritty pro who believed this was the music, not C&W, that you just had to do to be in the biz. This is a venue where the name Gene Vincent is invoked on stage the way Hank Williams would be elsewhere. The rockingest band here is probably Lloyd Arnold and the Rockin' Drifters, but everyone is greatt5. No big names (thought the illustrated history of the Jamboree in the thick booklet has stars a-plenty) but don't buy this for the stars, buy it for the magic!

The Willowz "Talkincircles" (Sympathy) Better than the movie "Willow," and if you know me you know that I think the movie *fucking rules!* Beautifully desperate futuristic garage punk that made me invent dances.

Sam Winch "the Lullabadeer" (Down Pony, samwinch.com) This is super good. This singer/songwriter/weird music crafter guy is dramatic, funny, brilliant and strange. Should be called Sammy Winch, because he is good enough at showbiz to be called "Sammy."

Wonkavision zine (pob 63680 Philadelphia PA 19147) This punk and culture magazine has really improved, with dynamic, flashy design, interesting editorial decisions (an all metal issue, genuine articles that go beyond band interviews) and good, concise reviews that cover all formats (CDs, video, cyber stuff and print). My only complaint is that some things seem to be design driven, which is good when you get a photo essay on a classic amusement park but bad when the band interviews seem to be shortened to make way for flashy layout. Overall, worth checking out.

Wrecking Crew "1987-1991" (Bridge Nine POB 990052 Boston MA32199) I saw this New England crossover band a lot during the late 80s and they represented everything that buried classic hardcore but also everything that was honest and brutal about the unashamed-to-be-meathead Boston hardcore scene. This collection definitely captures a long-era of punk.

Robin Wynn "Oblivion" (One True Vibe, onetruevibe.com) This singer-songwriter is a Wynn-er! (that, by the way, is supposed to read as "winner," not "whiner," her lovely voice is far from whiny)

X-ray Spex "Germfree Adolescents" (Sanctuary) Simply the greatest punk album of all time reissued with bonus tracks including the best punk single of all time ("Oh! Bondage Up Yours!") and some 1978 Peel sessions. I could go on and on about how Poly Styrene was ■ of the most original singers in the world, marrying the punk ethos of amateurish youthfulness with a sing-songy gift for melodic vocalizing that made even the most bizarre, overly-specific political lyrics incredibly memorable and catchy. The skronking, raw saxophone on this marks the kind of weirdness that Brit punk allowed in its infancy, and the fearless attack on conformity was obviously sincere when coming from the braces-filled mouth of Ms. Styrene. If you don't have this record and you only have enough money for one more CD in your life, buy this. I can personally guarantee it holds up to over one hundred thousand repeat listenings.

Yesterday's Rising (Fearless) This yesterday makes me wish for no tomorrow.

The Young Playthings "so into 60" b/w "lies" (www.youngplaytings.com) Garage rock is supposed to be a form so pure that it can't help but be good, but it usually isn't. So when a band comes forth just making short, sweet, raw punky pop tunes with Farfisa, guitar and sexiness converging without any bullshit clogging up the amp speakers, it makes me feel young and playful.

You Say Party! We Say Die! "hit the floor" (Sound Document, #540-360 Robson St. Vancouver BC Canada

V6B 2B2) Spasmodic dance punk that sounds young and fun and raw while still being together enough to make you shake.

Rebecca Zapen "Japanese Bathhouse" (Bashert 1650-302 Margaret St. #267 Jacksonville, FL 32204-3869) Zapen is zipping...into my heart!

Zine Zolar System zine ($2, POB 02222 Detroit MI 48202) This Motor City mag has a foundation of gag comix and dissidence, my two fave flavors.

Zom Zoms "one brain" (Omega Point) Cheap mini-synthesizers creating blippy bloopy new wave inanity is a good thing whether it sounds good or bad, so why dwell on "reviewing." Let's just say, "Zom is the Bom!"

GUEST REVIEWER #1: Jeff Rufo

Rock and the Pop Narcotic by Joe Carducci (Reboubt POB 276 Centennial WYOM 82055) Out of print for a decade before this reissue, Joe Carducci's mighty tome (checking in at a beefy, yet not unappreciated 529 pages) is certainly a valuable work on the more recent end – that is to say, the last fifty or so years - of rock history. Writing with a true connoisseur's eye towards detail and never afraid to go off on a descriptive tangent, Carducci is at his best when he analyzes certain artists, from demigods like the New York Dolls to rockography footnotes-to-be, the Goo Goo Dolls. Combining the rigorous critical approach of an academic musicologist with the enthusiasm of Joe Blow the concertgoer, it's not hard for Carducci to seduce, educate and entertain, all in a single chapter. While the first part of the book at times borders on the tedious– the author provides an exhaustive, sometimes exhausting account of the record industry and its place in the social network - the second half, jammed full of anecdotes, insights, and connections made between bands previously unimagined as being from the same planet, is a real treat. Who woulda thunk learning could be so damn fun? This book should rest on the front shelves of every high school in America – the kids could do much, much worse in terms of a model for analytic, expressive, and most importantly, passionate scholarship.

GUEST REVIEWER # 2: Evan Ginzburg

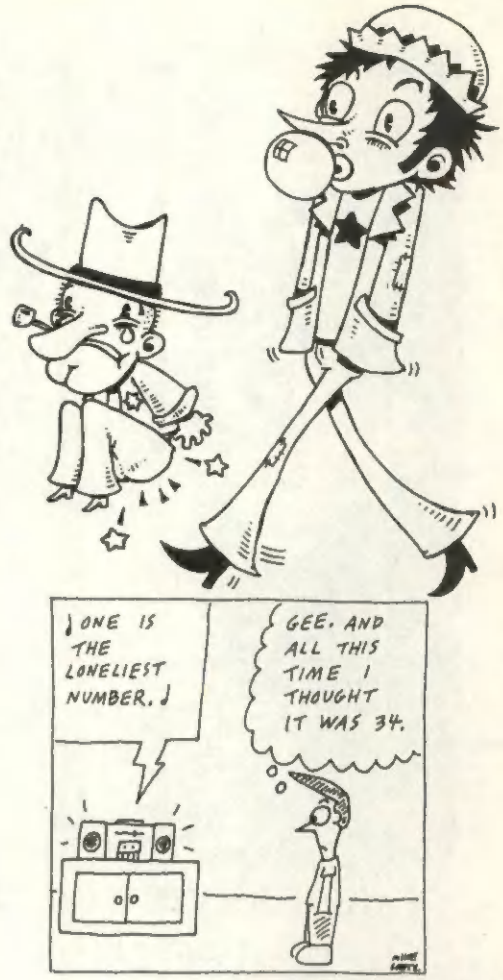
EARTH, WIND & FIRE with CHICAGO (JONES BEACH THEATER NY) As a longtime Earth, Wind & Fire fan with little or no interest in the group Chicago, I sure had reservations about this concert. But I was pretty much proved wrong. The show opened with EWF and Chicago *together* on stage where they did a sizzling 4 song set. Both bands exchanged lead vocals on each other's hits and the majesty of both world class horn sections combined was inspirational. This was followed by a great 1 hour EWF set featuring not only many of their classics, but some great new material. Phillip Bailey singing "Reasons" is still as good as it gets. Chicago followed and their short set was marred by poor sound at the beginning and their relying on too many of their later sappy ballads. Phillip Bailey joined them to sing lead on "If You Leave Me Now," and the fans literally booed when the sound killed the first half of the number- you couldn't hear him at all. As I turned to my girlfriend and said, "Chicago on their best day couldn't touch Earth, Wind and Fire on their worst, "the group nonetheless soon won me over as the finale of the night was a 6 song jam with both bands; it was simply *incredible*. The musicianship exhibited was riveting and although it was disconcerting at times to hear Chicago's vocalists doing parts where you expected to hear Phillip's superior vocals (they traded vocal duties), they certainly put the songs over. And to see that army of brilliant musicians together wailing on both groups' hits was musically courageous (when do you ever see name bands doing a project like this?) and ultimately a tremendous success. Fans left exhilarated from the experience as did this jaded fan. I should note that the 12,000 seat venue was nearly sold out, and both bands played live on the Today show Friday morning with Earth, Wind & Fire returning to the program just now for their second visit in 4 days. It's great to see EWF still on top after all these years and deservedly so. This tour can only help bring them an even wider audience and I was pleasantly surprised at just how well it all jelled.

GUEST REVIEWER #3: Mario

Public Enemy "It Takes A Nation – The First London Invasion Tour 1987" DVD (MVD) In November of 1987 with one album in the can the eye opening *YO! Bum Rush the Show*, PE ventured to London as part of the Def Jam UK Tour. The viewer is quickly reminded why PE is still relevant when you hear two things, the always recognizable sound of the air raid signal courtesy of underappreciated DJ Terminator X and an interesting comment from Chuck D, "I got flame in my eyes". Some people call that edgy but PE for all intents really did and still do believe in the power of their message. This 48 plus minute DVD, part of an 18 month "Public Enemy takeover" of media related gifts, also clarifies where the concert outtakes on the smash LP *It Takes a Nation of Millions* came from. The 1987 concert held in London's famous Hammersmith Odeon (emceed by groundbreaking BBC hip-hop DJ Dave Pierce) was all in or go home. Professor Griff and the S1W's take the stage followed by Flavor Flav (of the recent reality TV show *STRANGE LOVE*) and Chuck D and the ride is wonderful. A combination of concert footage, backstage vignettes and interviews shows a young Public Enemy standing firm to their philosophy of an African centered agenda. The viewer while watching the progression of PE in that November of '87 gets a sense that there was a shift developing in that philosophy. The inclusion of all people of color being "Public Enemies" was starting to become evident and would later play out in the bands future work. All of this is captured in a tight package that also rocks hard with hardcore hip-hop unapologetically putting the ball in the court of those who could not stand PE in the states or abroad. If nothing else this remind us why the music moved us and why their message put us on high alert. The film quality of the '87 concert is pre-digital so don't get your hopes up HDTV heads. This is a from-the-heart DVD showing blemishes and fun times. Featuring a cameo from a young LL Cool J, and Terminator X who actually is captured on film *talking* to Flavor Flav about the Hammersmith show. This is an insightful look at what makes PE to this minute one of the most socially relevant bands in music period. There are a few extra features including a photo gallery and audio commentary from Chuck D which is very helpful for those who somehow may not be familiar with the group. There is also extra footage of Public Enemy (minus Terminator X) in Australia 2003. Chuck and company can still bring it and if you can't go out and see PE when they land in your area, check out this DVD. It is a wonderfully nostalgic trip to a day that may be long gone baby, the golden age of honesty in words and music. It may also serve as a reminder for those who are old enough to remember a time when Rap music wasn't congested with multi-millionaires long on technology yet short on substance.

Art Speak: A Night of Ferocious Joy DVD (Displaced Films) This features a ton of lesser known yet widely critically acclaimed artists - Saul Williams, Mystic, Blackalicious, Ozomatli, and others in a concert movie/testimonial that will fly way under the radar. The concert was proposed to push the Not in Our Name message that spread through the community of artists and regular types across the globe after the events of 9/11 2001. On Mothers Day 2002 in Los Angeles under the wisdom and guidance of the Artist Network of Refuse and Resist, we are taken through the Diaspora of poetry, hip-hop and social comment. What is noticeable here is that the focus of the war on terror then was not on Iraq solely. The US and it's citizens were still frenzied and you totally get that from this movie. The underlying theme is hope and the many artists here do their level best to get that message out. Among the highlights a rapper whom I hadn't heard of, Mystic. Her voice is much like Vinia Mojica (De La Soul, A Tribe Called Quest) and she holds her own with any of the fellas in terms of delivery and content. A beautiful performance from Dwight Trible and The Pan Afrikan Peoples Arkestra, taking the Sun-Ra concept and surpassing all efforts to categorize the moment - it is a beautiful thing to watch. Personal favorite Dilated Peoples tears it up as always holding it down for the West Coast in an inspired performance. The idea of seeing any hip-hop/poetry types coming together nee NO NUKES is quite encouraging and yet disturbing at the same time. The effort is sincere yet the directors didn't give me the sense of urgency that is necessary when hoping to make people sympathetic to a cause. I recommend it for the musical performances and the hope that folks will buy this DVD and get the message - *Not In Our Name* which is why all of those great artists got together in the first place and that cannot be forgotten.

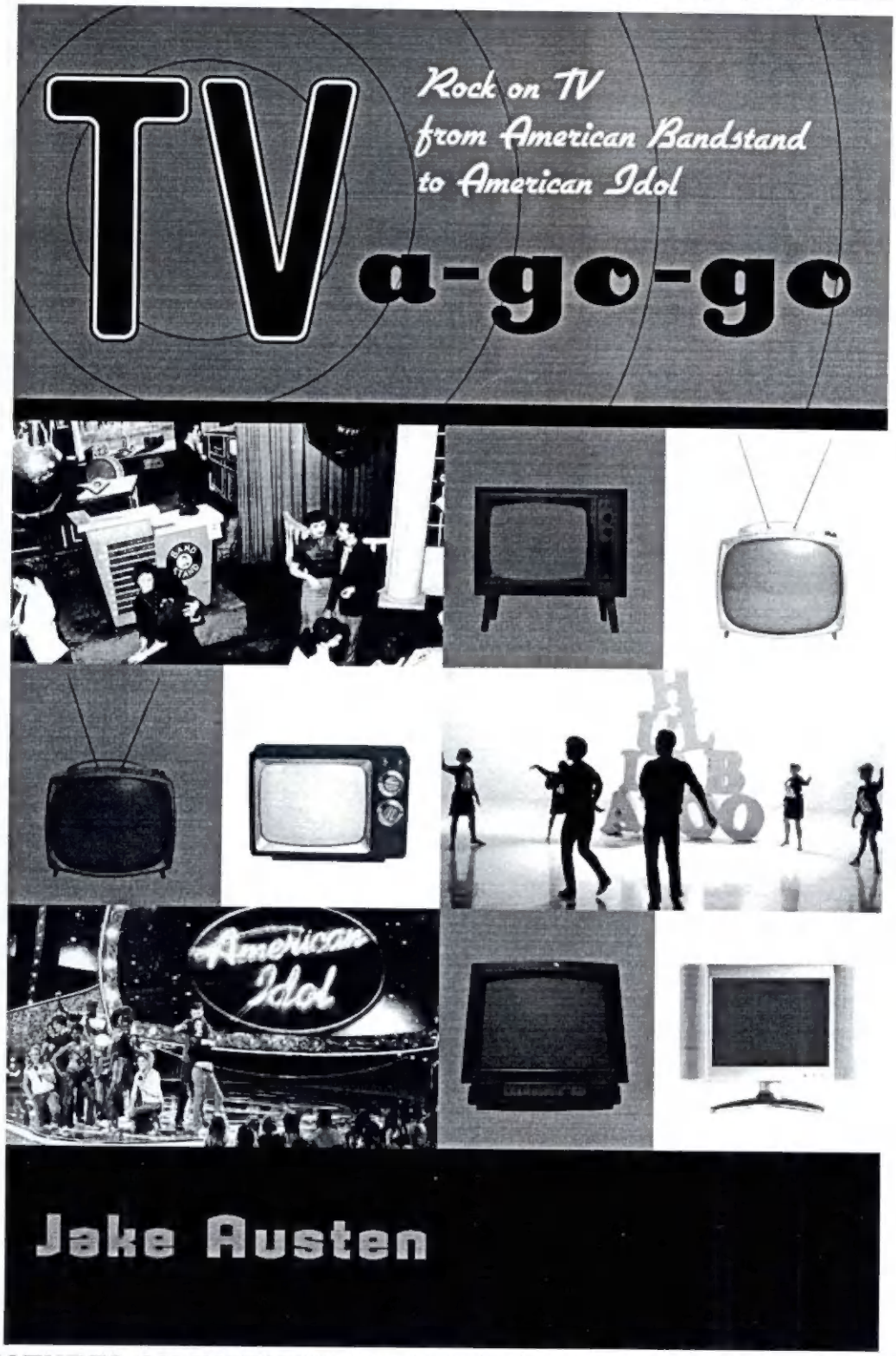
Mario is host of a weekly radio show News From the Service Entrance heard on WHPK 88.5fm Thursday from 2pm to 4pm in Chicago.



GUEST REVIEWER #4: Jake Austen - **Thor** "Thor Against the World," "An-Thor-logy" DVD (Smog Veil 550 W. Plumb Ln. #8501 Reno NV 89509)

I sadly had a Thor-free 70s and 80s, somehow never experiencing the artist who would have been my favorite had I known of him. When touring with a band in the 90s I found a record with a shirtless, leather clad bodybuilder holding wild Dobermans on the cover, and when my bandmates already knew of Thor I was kind of pissed that they hadn't filled me in earlier. I bought the album and really dug the low fi glam-disco-metal of "Keep The Dogs Away." I picked up his other material and though his subsequent 80s albums ("Dogs" was 1977) were more Metal, they came out in an era of cheesy drum fills and bad Metal trends. The joyful, absurdist lyrics were stil intact, but the music wasn't. great I also caught a Z-grade movie starring Thor and that confused me more. Who was this guy? In recent years Thor has come back into my world. He made it into the pages of this magazine by befriending Nardwuar and messing with Gene Simmons. Thor and Nardwuar? That actually answers some questions, as obviously he isn't some dumb bodybuilder who was rocking without a self-awareness of absurdity, or a cocky asshole jock who was possibly being "ironic" in a dickish way. Rather he was a humorous, cool dude. Far more questions were answered this year, as Thor's two new releases, and his Mighty Tour make it clear that Thor is one of the greats. His new CD "Thor Against the World" is a return to the galloping, danceable Metallic bubbleglam of his debut, with some incredibly catchy songs. "Dogs" actually had serious weak points despite its excellent title track. Thus, the new album is actually his best ever. Better still is the DVD. Now we really get his story. Jon Mikl Thor apparently became musclebound for the best reason ever...to emulate comic books! At his most beautiful he hooked up with a singing burlesque review, and the disc features Thor on *Merv Griffin* doing his thing is a glittering stripper outfit. It then jumps to his would be Metal days and here Thor again reveals a humble side. Despite the grandness of the song and the hulking size of the singer, his videos are done on a small bar stage. The rest of the DVD features news stories on Thor, Metal videos, cable access appearances, feats of strength and even a few commercials he starred in. This is the release of the year! And to top it off, Thor played Chicago for the first time ever! He still has arms like tree trunks, though he's thicker all around now, but that didn't stop him from giving an amazingly ridiculously awesome show! Before the first song was done he was playing air-sword! He did over 20 helmet changes! He fought monsters! He lost caps on his teeth bending a steel bar in his mouth! THANK YOU THOR, WE ARE NOT WORTHY!

NEW BOOK BY ROCTOBER'S EDITOR!



ALSO FEATURES AN INDEX WITH ROCTOBER WRITERS GENTLEMAN JOHN BATTLES, KEN BURKE, GARY PIG GOLD & JAMES PORTER

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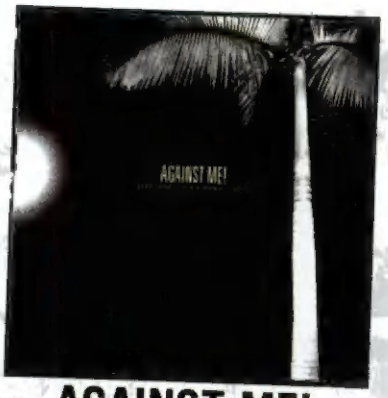

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